Sandwell
CHRONICLE
Thursday, November 23, 2017

CITY STILL CONFIDENT OF WINNING COMMONWEALTH GAMES BID

An image of the Games aquatic centre

THE Black Country could play a greater role in the 2022 Commonwealth Games than first thought if Birmingham's bid to host it is successful.

Officials behind the Second City's bid have said they remain confident of staging the Games, despite concerns about its package.

Birmingham City Council's interim chief executive Stella Manzie did not rule out the prospect of the Black Country becoming more involved in the event at a meeting of the region's Local Enterprise Partnership.

She was asked by her counterpart in Walsall, Helen Paterson, about the town hosting judo as it is home to the sport's centre of excellence.

Ms Manzie also raised the possibility of some athletes being based in the Black Country, as well as the launch of fan zones.

But she added the region's main involvement was likely to be swimming and diving, with a multi-million aquatics centre lined up for Smethwick. Cycling has been earmarked to take place on Cannock Chase.

Ms Manzie said: "The big gain in the Black Country will be in relation to the aqua centre. We are getting all the information about all the links across the Black Country, either with different sports or centres, and looking at what type of facilities we have got."

Ms Manzie admitted there were still some 'issues' over funding for the bid, which must be submitted by November 30. She also suggested rival bids could also come in, from either Malaysia or Australia.

Ms Manzie said: "As things currently stand we have been assembling funding to go into the bid. There are still some issues around that but they are in hand."

Judges dismiss appeal after worker injured by machinery

FIRM LOSES FIGHT ON TOE-LOSS FINE

A PACKAGING company in West Bromwich fined a £400,000 after an employee lost his toes has had a legal bid to have the amount reduced thrown out by senior judges.

Maintenance engineer, Peter Fairbrother, suffered life-changing injuries when he was pulled into machinery at Diamond Box Limited's Shaw Street plant.

The corrugated cardboard box design and manufacturing business was founded in 2007, Mr Justice Hickinbottom told London's Appeal Court.

And the machinery involved in the accident is 'as long as a commercial bus', added the judge. Cardboard is fed into one end and passes through the machine at substantial speed on a conveyor system.

Safety concerns had been expressed by a member of staff that a 'serious accident' could happen.

And, on May 28, 2014, 'a serious accident did happen', said the judge.

Mr Fairbrother's left foot was pulled into the moving parts of the machine and he lost all of the toes on that foot.

Now aged 70, he has been left with a serious disability, cannot work, has difficulty walking and had to move to live closer to his daughter.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that the machinery had a 'jog mode' which could have been set up to enable maintenance work to be carried out safely.

But the firm had not identified this, trained staff to use it or enforced its use. Diamond Box admitted breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety

By Clare Butler

at Work Act. It was fined £400,000 and ordered to pay costs of £9,886.04 at Wolverhampton Crown Court on January 27.

The company, which had no previous convictions, has co-operated with the HSE since the accident and taken steps to make sure there is no recurrence. Diamond Box's lawyers argued that the fine was far too tough and should be reduced. And they pointed to a net profit for the 16-month period up to March 31, 2016 of just £14,706.

But Lord Justice Hickinbottom said dividends of £175,000 had been paid out during that same period.

And £405,000 had been set aside for 'exceptional administrative expenses'.

That was made up of £125,000 reserved to pay for the accident fine and £280,000 for bad debt.

"The accounts clearly indicate that, even in the difficult year of 2015-16, a substantial portion of the fine could have been paid," said the judge.

Football day in tragic Chris's memory

Above, at the event, back from left, Chris's partner Sarah-Jayne Collins, step mom Leanne Room, mother Pauline Room. Front, from left, Chris's brothers Josh Brookes, Declan Room, 11, and Craig Brookes. Inset, Chris.

A COMMUNITY came together to raise money for the funeral of Oldbury bridge fall victim, Chris Brookes.

More than 100 people attended the event held at Meadow Road Youth & Venture Site in Wren's Nest, Dudley.

Chris, aged 22, died after falling from a bridge over Wolverhampton ring road on the night of October 28. He left behind a three-year-old daughter, called Layla-Jade, and pregnant girlfriend Sarah Jayne Collins, 23, who is expecting their son Chris Junior in January.

Sarah, from Tame Road in Oldbury, said: "I think it is amazing how many people came out. It is overwhelming. I think the support has been amazing. Chris would be proud."

A football tournament, tombola and a bouncy castle for children were among the activities held during the community event on Saturday. The day was held to raise money for Chris' funeral, which is taking place on November 29.

A fundraising on www.justiving.com page was set up in the wake of his death to support his family. The target was £3,000, but it was surpassed within a week and now stands at more than £4,300.

To donate to the fundraising appeal, visit www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/ripchrisbrookes

MURDER

Killer father to serve 33 years behind bars

A KILLER father who smothered his young children with a petrol-soaked rag and then tried to kill his wife in a gas explosion at their home has been jailed for life.

Endris Mohammed, aged 47, also tried to murder his partner, Penil Teklehaimanot, by setting fire to the family home in Hamstead, Great Barr, and puncturing the gas pipes. But the fire didn't take hold and Ms Teklehaimanot was woken by a smoke alarm.

Mohammed had denied the murders, claiming diminished responsibility allegedly caused by a depressive disorder.

Mohammed was found guilty of two counts of murder and one of attempted murder after a two-week trial and will be 80 before he gets out of jail.

He fled in his Uber cab after killing Saros and Leanor at their home in Holland Road on October 28 last year.

Mohammed claimed he had decided to end his own life over money worries but police found the family could live off his wife's earnings as a care worker.

● Appalling – Page 4

FOOTBALL

Supporters split over Pulis sacking

BAGGIES fans are split over the decision to sack Tony Pulis, as the search for his replacement goes on. Albion sacked the head coach, bringing an end to his near-three-year reign at the club.

A statement released by the club thanked the Welshman for his efforts but said results over the back end of last season and this season had been 'very disappointing'.

Simon Vowles, aged 34, a retail assistant, said: "I think it's about time that he went. A lot of people were saying it was his time to go. We need to move the club forward now and get a decent manager in."

However, Carl Phillpott, 46, who is a team leader at a building society, said: "I am a bit sad that he has gone as I thought he was doing a good job. I would like to see Martin O'Neill take over the role. When there is change there is uncertainty but I think we have a much better squad now."

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GERRY'S BACK ON THE BUSES

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CONTACT US

EDITORIAL:
Tel: 01384 353201/01384 353205
E-mail: sandwell.chronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

SPORTS:
Tel: 01902 319453
E-mail: chron.sport@expressandstar.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHIC: Tel: 01902 319430
E-mail: picturedesk@expressandstar.co.uk

ADVERTISING: Nicola Cope
Tel: 01902 319573
E-mail: nicola.cope@expressandstar.co.uk

PROPERTY: Colin Bailey
Tel: 01902 313131 ext 3731
E-mail: colin.bailey@expressandstar.co.uk

MOTORING: Stuart Whitehead
Tel: 01902 319177
E-mail: stuart.whitehead@expressandstar.co.uk

CLASSIFIED:
Tel: 01902 317878
E-mail: my-classified@expressandstar.co.uk

DISTRIBUTION: Paul Jones
Tel: 01902 319990
E-mail: p.jones@expressandstar.co.uk

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51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES
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'White Widow's' son believed to be alive

Jojo Dixon, training with ISIS

THE radicalised son of a British terrorist recruiter is believed to be alive despite reports he was killed in a drone strike.

Sally Jones, who was dubbed the 'White Widow' and married to Birmingham terrorist Junaid Hussain, died following a US airstrike in June.

She travelled to Syria to join ISIS with son Joe 'Jojo' Dixon in 2013 but died when the American forces targeted the convoy she was travelling with.

Reports at the time suggested 12-year-old Jojo was also killed in the attack – possibly due to Jones using him as a human shield. But Syrian sources now believe the boy is still alive and has been training as an ISIS fighter.

It has been claimed the youngster was actually 35 miles away in village al-Shaafa, near Syrian's eastern border with Iraq, at the time of the drone strike. Jones left her home in Britain to marry Kings Heath terrorist hacker Hussain but Jojo was taken from her to train as a fighter alongside other children when her husband was killed two years ago.

Terrorists decided Jojo was old enough to fight for ISIS, alongside other children, when he reached his 12th birthday last December, The Telegraph reported.

He took part in several months of training as part of the 'cubs of the caliphate' camp, with his last known photo snapped during training in Raqqa.

It is thought the 12-year-old, who has been used in the group's propaganda videos, was radicalised by Syrian fighters. A nine-minute ISIS video released last year appeared to show Jojo, who was renamed Hamza Hussain aged nine, executing a captured prisoner in a firing squad.

Murder suspect will be charged next September

POLICE will charge a man over the murder of a Black Country pizza shop owner after he is released from prison in Romania.

Masoud Esmailian, aged 46, was found dead at his home in Montgomery Walk, West Bromwich, on August 30, 2015 with two stab wounds.

Andrei Ilie, who was the last person to be seen with Mr Esmailian, had been 'helping out' at Roma Pizza, which was run by the victim, but fled the country as police looked to speak with him in relation to the murder.

Ilie is currently serving a three-year prison sentence for two non-related matters in the Arges County of Romania, which begun in September 2015.

Speaking at an inquest into the death of Mr Esmailian, West Midlands Police Det Insp Justin Spanner said: "We had been told that Ilie, a Romanian national, had been helping the victim with the general day to day running of his pizza shop business for a few weeks prior to the murder.

Towel

"Having spoken to friends of his after he fled the country, we know that he was short of money and needed cash to purchase a ticket back to Romania. We later discovered that takings of £1,000 from the shop were unaccounted for.

"We also found a towel covered in blood at the home of Ilie, and we have confirmed that blood is a match with the victim.

"There were also fingerprints on the packaging for the knife used in the murder which we have confirmed belong to Ilie after having them sent over from his prison in Romania. When he is released from prison next September in Romania, he will be brought to England, charged with murder and court proceedings will begin."

Senior Coroner Zaffar Siddique delivered a verdict of unlawful killing during the inquest at Oldbury Coroner's Court on Monday and said: "I would like to offer my sincere condolences to the family."

Victoria's death 'hard to take in'

Friends together – Julie and Victoria, seen during one of their many collaborations

DAME Julie Walters has said she still speaks to a photograph of long-time friend Victoria Wood following her death 18 months ago. The Smethwick-born star was a long-time collaborator and close friend of the comedian, who died of cancer aged 62 in April last year.

Dame Julie, referring to a picture of Victoria in her house: "I always look at that picture when I go past.

"Sometimes, when there's nobody around, I look at it and say 'where are you?' I still find it difficult to take in." The pair's professional collaborations made a huge contribution to British television and comedy throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and they worked together on many programmes, including sketch show Wood And Walters, soap opera parody Acorn Antiques and sitcom Dinnerladies.

Although Dame Julie, 67, had plenty of Hollywood offers during that time, she said she doesn't regret turning them down. "Because I'm British, I guess, and I like British writing and British work, and I love it here," she said.

She said she only once worked with film producer Harvey Weinstein – who has been at the centre of dozens of allegations – and 'didn't see it', but that the revelations were 'shocking – but also not shocking, somehow'.

Dame Julie is currently working on Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again, a follow-up to the 2008 hit, with Lily James, Pierce Brosnan and Colin Firth.

Campaign launched over use of antibiotics

A HEALTH campaign has been launched in Sandwell warning residents about over-using antibiotics.

Public Health England has launched the initiative called 'Keep Antibiotics Working'. It warns that people should not use antibiotics unnecessarily, such as for colds and coughs, because they will stop working to treat some infections.

At least 5,000 deaths happen each year in England because antibiotics no longer work for some infections.

Councillor Elaine Costigan, cabinet member for public health and protection, said: "We all have a part to play in ensuring that antibiotics continue to work for future generations. It is important that both health professionals and the general public work together to tackle this issue. Taking antibiotics when you don't need them puts you and your family at risk of developing infections which cannot be easily treated.

"This campaign is designed to reduce inappropriate use of antibiotics. We urge people to always take their doctor's advice and remember pharmacists can recommend medicines to help with your symptoms or pain."

For more information, visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/antibiotics

Ready for War at city's arena

TO celebrate 40 years since the original iconic album release, the spectacular sights and sounds of Jeff Wayne's Musical Version of The War of the Worlds will return to arenas throughout the UK next year.

The show will be staged on Saturday December 8 at Birmingham's Genting Arena.

Jeff Wayne's double album was originally released by CBS Records in 1978. It has enjoyed huge success and critical acclaim across the globe with over 15 million records sold and spending over 330 weeks in the UK Album Charts (to date) plus achieving two international hit singles, 'Forever Autumn' and 'The Eve of The War'.

Tickets go on sale from tomorrow, Friday.

Online risks for young outlined

THE risks of online sexual grooming will be discussed at a series of meetings with parents and carers.

Sandwell Council has organised 'Clickwise' for parents to learn about keeping their children safe online. To book a place and find out more information go to sandwell.gov.uk/shapeevents.

'Predatory behaviour' A&E doctor is struck off

AN A&E doctor accused of being sexually aroused when he approached two female colleagues has been struck off. Dr Mohammed Yasin, aged 30, denied sexual misconduct during the incident in which he hugged them tightly.

He also allegedly moved his hands down their bodies and thrust against them, pressing his upper legs into the two women who claimed the doctor was 'pleased' to see them.

At a medical tribunal Yasin, who was working as a locum at New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton, denied their claims saying the women may have been confused as he had a Nokia Candybar handset and car key fob in his trouser pocket.

He also said he hugged the women – known as Miss A and Miss B – because he wanted to 'fit in' and had seen other colleagues of a similar background to himself doing the same.

At the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service in Manchester, a disciplinary panel accepted Yasin 'may well have had such items in his pocket' at the time of the incident in April last year but found him guilty of sexually motivated conduct.

Panel chairman Richard Tutt said: "Dr Yasin abused the special position of trust a doctor occupies and demonstrated sexually motivated predatory behaviour towards two junior female colleagues in the workplace."

Royal Blood gig phone thefts call

A MAN has been arrested after over 50 phones were stolen at a Royal Blood gig in Birmingham.

A total of 53 phones were recovered by police from a 22-year-old man, who was arrested on suspicion of theft, after Saturday's gig at the Arena Birmingham. Police targeted the gig after receiving intelligence that the band's previous shows had been targeted by phone thieves.

Officers are now appealing for people who attended the gig and had their phone stolen to contact them. Det Sgt Jeff Clifford, said: "The vast majority of victims have been identified, but we urge anyone who attended the concert who is missing a phone to call 101, with log 671 19/11/17 being used to record new reports."

Antiques fair due

AN antiques fair is taking place this weekend.

The Cranmore Park Vintage & Antiques Fair is being held at Cranmore Park Exhibition Centre in Solihull on Sunday.

Speed display sign put up outside school

A SIGN which flashes up the registration number of speeding vehicles has been introduced outside a primary school in Sandwell.

The device on the A34 Birmingham Road near St Margaret's Primary School in Great Barr is activated by any vehicle travelling above the 30mph speed limit for that road.

The school and road safety officers say traffic has been noticeably slower since the sign's installation at the beginning of September.

The introduction of the special sign is part of a major road safety campaign on roads around the school, after three people were killed on local roads in just 12 months.

Safer

Sandwell Council's highways boss Councillor David Hosell said: "The staff, pupils and parents at St Margaret's were concerned about speeding outside the school and they have worked with us to help to make the area around their school safer for everyone.

"The children have designed road signs and banners which we've put up on both sides of the road to remind drivers of the speed limit.

"Speed kills, I'd appeal to drivers to slow down and keep these children safe."

Head teacher at St Margaret's Primary School Jayne Stackhouse said: "Our school community is really pleased that the work our children have done over the past year with Sandwell Road Safety Team and Sandwell councillors.

"It's really made a difference and resulted in new safety measures being put in place along the A34 road outside school which certainly seems to be working.

"I think St Margaret's School is now definitely more visible to road users and we feel a lot safer."

Five Star service on way at community centre

A NEW day centre for people with learning disabilities has opened its doors with bosses declaring: "We are here to make a difference".

The Five Star Community Centre, which is based on Willenhall Road, Darlaston, is now open after three years of hard work from managers Claire Neary and Wayne Haskett.

The site includes a sensory room, activity hub, function room with a bar and a cafe and will be open Monday to Friday from 9am to 4pm.

The team is hopeful that the site can combat cuts to adult social care services across the borough and bring the community together.

Registering

Claire, who has worked in care for 30 years, said: "This has taken us three years to get together, taking into account registering with the CQC and getting the building ready.

"We are ready now and hope to become a key part of our community, we think our centre can offer services to people with learning disabilities that they can't get elsewhere, our sensory room in particular is really special and something we are very proud to have.

"We are not here to make millions, we are here to make a difference to the lives of people who need our help."

The centre will take stock of how many members of staff are required after a few months of seeing how much the site is used.

The opening day was attended by Walsall mayor councillor Marco Longhi, who cut the ribbon at an official opening ceremony.

Claire said: "It was great for us to have the mayor come along and support us, it really means a lot.

"The opening day went great and we hope to be working with the community very soon."

Mayor Marco Longhi opens the centre with Jennifer Oldacres, Wayne Haskett, Wendy Owen, Michelle Kelly and Claire Neary

Youngsters at play in the Hub at the centre

Claire Neary in the sensory room at the Five Star Community Centre in Darlaston

Mayor Marco Longhi chats to service user Steven Harvey with Wayne Haskett at the premises in Darlaston

The main hall, a function room which features facilities such as a cafe and a bar to serve the community

NEWS IN BRIEF

Collecting festive gifts for children

CENTRAL England Co-operative Travel is collecting items for Acorns Children's Hospice.

Toys, games, book, DVDs, clothing and ornaments can all be donated to the store in Great Barr until December 13, helping to spread Christmas cheer to children with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions

Lisa Howell, branch manager, said: "We all think Acorns is an amazing charity which gives access to care and support for these children.

"We would like to think if we were ever put into this devastating position there are organisations like Acorns to support us."

Taxi firm opens up at new premises

A SANDWELL taxi firm has relocated to a new shop as part of its business expansion. Choice Cars UK Ltd has moved to new premises in Wednesbury Town Centre.

The firm unveiled its new store on Friday at a ribbon-cutting ceremony, attended by Wednesbury North councillor's Elaine Costigan and Peter Hughes and Wednesbury South councillor Pam Hughes.

A spokesman said: "Our mission at Choice Cars UK Ltd is to be the most customer-centric company, dedicated to setting the standards for all your travel requirements."

Details flow in interactive guide

A BOAT insurance site has teamed up with The Canal & River Trust to create an interactive guide to celebrate the history of the hugely popular waterways system.

The History of the Waterways depicts how the nation's canals have changed over the past century. With the invention of modern technology and engineering, many of these canals and hotspots are still in working use and regularly enjoyed by the narrowboat community. Visit www.insure-4boats.co.uk/historyofthewaterways for more information

University gives away 350 books

BIRMINGHAM City University has donated more than 350 books to a new research institute in The Gambia, to help advance education and academic research in the African country.

The Institute for Academic Research is situated in the urban centre of Serekunda and has been set up by BCU postgraduate student and visiting lecturer Lamin Daffeh to support students and academics at the University of The Gambia.

COUNTY NEWS

£284k raised at seized car auction

TWENTY three BMWs and 17 Audis were are among 180 seized vehicles which have been sold at auction by West Midlands Police.

The haul has raised £284,480 for the force and included one vehicle sold for £19,700.

Not all cars seized by the police were sold at auction, with 4,740 so far sent for crushing this year.

In total 8,091 have been seized from the roads in 2017, most for being uninsured.

The vehicles seized are part of a crackdown by police on uninsured and unlicensed drivers over the past 12 months.

Moorhouse and Delaney on bill

COMEDIANS Justin Moorhouse and Gary Delaney will be performing in the next Live at the Civic comedy night at Brierley Hill Civic Hall in the new year.

The show is on February 17 with tickets £10 if booked by the end of this month from bhillcivic.co.uk

Moorhouse has appeared on the likes of Live At The Apollo and 8 Out Of 10 Cats, is a regular panellist on Five Live's Fighting Talk and has starred in Coronation Street. Gary Delaney, married to fellow comic Sarah Millican, is a Mock The Week regular.

The host will be Dudley rising star Wayne Beese.

Show added to channel schedule

A NEW magazine show has been added to the schedule at Made Television, the national city TV network.

The Big Daily is broadcast at 6.30pm each week night on all the Made stations including Made in Birmingham.

Hosted by Mel Crawford and Tom Evans, it includes updates on the latest events and entertainment news from across the region, plus regular segments on food and music performances.

Rock legends Iron Maiden back in Brum

LEGENDARY rockers Iron Maiden return to Birmingham next year.

Formed in 1975, the band have released 38 albums – including live recordings, EPs and compilations.

Their 16th studio album, The Book of Souls, was released in 2015.

Iron Maiden will play Birmingham's Genting Arena on August 7. Tickets will go on sale from 9am on November 24.

Plant's roots revisited at Civic show

REVIEW
Robert Plant
Wolverhampton Civic Hall

GREAT to see two Midlands rock icons back together, Robert Plant and Wolverhampton Civic Hall.

Both legends are in action again, both the venue (reopened after it was closed for refurbishment) and the Black Country's home grown rock god.

There is always something special about a Plant gig in Wolverhampton, just a George Berry clearance kick away from his beloved Molineux and back with his people, where references to Tipton and Walsall Arboretum are fully understood. They were queuing back to Queen Square to get into this sold out concert.

The former Led Zeppelin frontman even had his Auntie Gwen in the audience, who he thanked for taking him to Wolverhampton's Gaumont Cinema to see such acts as Bo Diddley, the Everly Brothers and some young band called The Rolling Stones. "I didn't like them," he quipped. Take that Jagger. There is a certain wistfulness about Plant's new album Carry Fire, reflected in his comment to the audience: "Three score and nine is a funny place to be."

Robert Plant at the Civic Hall

No longer the snake-hipped Adonis, more elder statesman, but he is always looking forward rather than surviving on past glories. Long-time fans may bemoan the diminishing likelihood of another Led Zep reunion but they can enjoy plenty of compensation in the stomping folk-rock of his band The Sensational Space Shifters, here boosted by the inclusion of top folk singer and fiddler Seth Lakeman, who became an honorary Space Shifter after his support set. The two guitarists, Skin Tyson and Justin Adams, were exceptional. Opening with New World from the new album, followed by Turn It Up from 2014's Lullaby and the Ceaseless Roar, Plant then turned the clock back to 1970 for the ballad That's The Way from Led Zeppelin III.

Other Led Zep classics were to follow, Gallows Pole and Misty Mountain Hop, Babe I'm Gonna Leave You, in a set marked by some outstanding covers, including Bukka White's Fixin' To Die and a radical revamp of traditional tune Little Maggie.

It had to end with an epic and so the fans were treated to Whole Lotta Love as the final encore, blended with traditional folk song Santa Anna.

Just to hear the most famous riff in rock again sent a shiver down the spine and sent the audience home happy.

LEON BURAKOWSKI

Children were killed 'in most appalling manner'

By Annabal Bagdi

A REFUGEE who found sanctuary in Britain murdered his two children in 'the most appalling manner imaginable', a judge said.

Taxi driver Endris Mohammed killed eight-year-old Saros Endris and his sister Leanor, six, and attempted to murder his partner, Penil Teklehaimanot, by tampering with a gas pipe and setting fire to the family home in Hamstead, Great Barr.

Endris Mohammed – set car alight

Mohammed, 47, had denied the murders, claiming diminished responsibility allegedly caused by a depressive disorder. But, rejecting his claims that he had not meant to kill his family, Mr Justice Andrew Gilbart said: "You designed to kill all three."

Passing sentence at Birmingham Crown Court the judge added: "This country has a long proud tradition of welcoming those who flee from persecution. That secure and apparently happy life was destroyed by you. Your partner lost her family and her home at one fell swoop."

Mr Justice Andrew Gilbart sentenced Mohammed to life in prison with a minimum 33 years.

He told Mohammed: "In the early hours of October 28, 2016, you scattered petrol around the living room of the house the four of you shared, having tried to disconnect the cooker and gas hose, ready to set light to the house where your partner slept upstairs. Your idea was that when the petrol caught light, there would be a conflagration which would consume all three of them. You smothered your children with petrol soaked cloth before or after preparing the other parts of the conflagration.

Siblings Saros, aged eight and Leanor, aged six, who were murdered by their father

"That the conflagration did not take place was because you did not understand that you had made the atmosphere too full of petrol fumes, and because the gas hose had been designed to resist being cut.

"The smoke alarm woke your partner. Fortunately, she was able to escape with the help of her neighbours. But it was too late for the children, both of whom you had smothered."

He added: "As I have said, your partner had established her life here as a refugee from persecution. That safe haven she shared with you and her children was destroyed by you in the most appalling manner imaginable, for this was a terrible criminal enterprise on your part, designed to kill all three of your family, partner and children, as they slept.

"Your children looked to you for guidance, protection and love. They trusted you implicitly and were enjoying your company even on the night of their murder. You repaid their trust in you by killing them."

Mohammed – who originally came to the UK from Ethiopia – was told: "You deliberately snuffed out their young lives," by Justice Gilbart.

Rapists let off with a caution, in new figures

RAPISTS, paedophiles and drug dealers are among offenders being 'let off' with cautions in the West Midlands.

More than 8,000 cautions, where a criminal admits an offence, have been issued in the region over the last two years, including some for sexual offences against children.

The figures were today branded as 'sickening' by campaigners. The information, released under the Freedom of Information Act, shows cautions were issued in the West Midlands:

- 49 times for sexual offences on women aged 13 and older and once for a rape of a girl aged between 13 and 15
- 189 times for wilful neglect of a child
- Eight times when adults had sexual activity with a girl
- Eight times for carrying imitation firearms or air guns.

But police said the information in the FOI shouldn't be taken 'out of context' and that cautions carry 'real sanctions' with 'long-term implications'. The figures show that hundreds of drug users were issued with cautions, including one case of possession of crystal meth, 270 cases of cocaine, 25 crack cocaine, 51 heroin, and 902 for cannabis. A total of 19 drug dealers were also cautioned.

There was also one caution issued for bigamy.

Campaigner Ian Jenkins used an FOI to reveal the figures. The Midlands Lib Dem activist said: "It is completely unacceptable to give cautions for rape or sexual assaults, including children. It is sickening and will make people think that evil paedophiles and abusers can commit these acts."

Woman sees off bogus salesmen

AN elderly woman whacked a pair of bogus callers with her stick when she suspected they were trying to trick their way into her home.

Two people approached the property on Fullbrook Road, in The Delves, trying to sell gold, but having been targeted before the woman questioned the culprits.

She rebuffed them with her stick when one of the suspects put his foot in the doorway.

West Midlands Police said it was now investigating after the woman reported the incident to them. It happened at around 2.30pm on November 10. Neighbourhood officers have been on the lookout for suspicious callers.

Anyone with information which could help the inquiry should call police on 101.

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Festive fun promised as Santas line up for event

THERE'S still time to take part in the Sandwell Santa Dash through Sandwell Valley Country Park to get an early slice of festive fun in the run-up to Christmas.

About 500 people are expected to take part in a Santa costume in the third Sandwell Santa Dash on December 2 to give people the chance to get active before the Christmas break, with the deadline for registration being tomorrow, Friday.

The event is being organised by Mytime Active in partnership with Sandwell Leisure Trust, Sandwell Council and Sandwell Valley Country Park. It's the perfect way for families to get active this Christmas.

"It's not a race, but a fun run, jog or walk around the course, allowing people to be part of a fantastic Christmas experience as one of hundreds of Santas taking part," said deputy council leader Councillor Syeda Khatun.

People who register for the run are emailed a voucher for the runner's pack containing their own Santa suit and race number and will receive a souvenir medal at the finish.

People can sign up a maximum of six people on each registration form. Under-12s must be accompanied by an adult. Under-3s won't receive their own race pack or Santa suit, but there will be a medal for them at the finish.

More information at www.mytime-active.co.uk/sandwell-santa-dash

Boy in collision with 4x4 unhurt

A BOY escaped uninjured after a collision with a 4x4 vehicle. The incident happened outside Harborne Hill School, Harborne Road, Edgbaston shortly before 4pm last Thursday.

An ambulance, a paramedic officer and the Midlands Air Ambulance from Cosford with a MERIT trauma doctor on board were sent to the scene.

A West Midlands Ambulance Service spokeswoman said: "When crews arrived they found a boy, believed to be 12-years-old, who was on the floor after a collision with a 4x4. The boy was said to have initially been knocked unconscious however, he was thankfully awake when ambulance staff arrived. Crews carried out an initial assessment and found the boy had suffered an isolated head injury.

Due to the boy being distressed, the crews quickly transferred him into the back of the ambulance where it was quieter and more private. The boy was given pain relief and he was fully immobilised before being taken to Birmingham Children's Hospital for further assessment and treatment where on arrival he was said to be in a stable condition."

Hospital builder Carillion's shares fall

Contract – the Midland Met Hospital

SHARES in Carillion have plummeted more than 40 per cent as the troubled construction group warned over profits and flagged up major problems with its debts.

Shares were down to 17p at one point. A year ago they were worth £2.54. The Wolverhampton-based outsourcing and construction group said annual profits looked set to be "materially lower than current market expectations" as it grapples with a string of delays and smaller-than-expected improvements to margins on certain contracts.

Carillion has been in crisis since June, when it revealed major losses on some building projects, and at the end of September revealed half year losses had passed the £1 billion mark.

The firm employs around 400 at its HQ on Wolverhampton's Ring Road St Mark's. Around 20,000 of its 43,000 strong workforce is based in the UK, where it has major contracts working on road and rail schemes and maintaining military bases.

It is also building the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital in Smethwick and is working on the huge Paradise redevelopment in Birmingham city centre. It has continued to win work, however, including part of the HS2 railway line construction and new building projects in the Middle East.

Despite efforts to drive down costs, haul in cash and push through disposals, the group said it would fail to hit its net debt to earnings ratio of 1 to 1.5 times by the end of 2018.

As a result, the firm expects to breach its financial covenants by the end of December this year, with annual average net borrowing to come in between £875 million and £925m.

JLR's driverless cars to be tested on streets

THE UK's first on-the-road trials for self-driving cars in a city are taking place in the West Midlands as Jaguar Land Rover puts its experimental autonomous vehicles through their paces.

As well as self-driving the cars are connected by communications technology so they can 'talk' to each other and to roadside systems such as traffic lights.

The real-world testing is now taking place on the streets of Coventry, near JLR's Whitley headquarters, as part of the £20 million UK Autodrive project. It is one of just 12 cities around the world conducting such tests.

Initially the cars will run on closed off sections of road before open road trials and demonstrations in both Coventry and Milton Keynes next year. Nick Rogers, JLR's executive director for product engineering, said: "Testing this self-driving project on public roads is so exciting, as the complexity of the environment allows us to find robust ways to increase road safety in the future.

Collaborative

"By using inputs from multiple sensors, and finding intelligent ways to process this data, we are gaining accurate technical insight to pioneer the automotive application of these technologies.

"Jaguar Land Rover is proud to be a leader in collaborative research projects for autonomous and connected cars. We are supporting innovative research that will be integral to the infrastructure, technology and legal landscape needed to make intelligent, self-driving vehicles a reality within the next decade."

The trials in Coventry will discover how future connected and autonomous vehicles can replicate human behaviour and reactions when driving.

Jaguar Land Rover is developing both fully and semi-autonomous vehicle technologies so that in the future its cars will enable owners to drive themselves or allow the car to either assist or take over complete control, both on and off the road, no matter the weather.

Gerry's back on the buses at 100

Gerry, aged 100, seen in his uniform at the National Express bus depot in West Bromwich for the unveiling

IT'S an honour given to few – but then Michael 'Gerry' Byrne already has a special place in bus history.

The great-grandfather, who has just celebrated his 100th birthday, was the last bus conductor in Stourbridge, and his former bosses decided to mark his milestone birthday by naming a bus after him. Mr Byrne and his family were invited to the National Express bus depot in West Bromwich for the unveiling. The bus company also made a plaque commemorating the occasion which was presented to him at his birthday party at the Stourbridge Institute last month, when the surprise was revealed.

The former Midland Red employee worked on the buses for more than 30 years, from 1948 until 1979, putting in plenty of overtime to provide for his eight children. He covered routes as far afield as Bridgnorth, Worcester and Birmingham. Gerry said: "It was hard work for conductors being on your feet all day but you could sit and have a chat with passengers if it wasn't busy."

Bryan Bannister, the company's group communications manager, said: "We were delighted to do this for him."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Workshops set out to tackle bullying

WORKSHOPS helped pupils as part of an anti-bullying campaign.

Sandwell Council's SHAPE Programme ran the workshops with West Midlands Police as part of Anti-Bullying Week last week.

The sessions taught children how to look after themselves and others in a bid to stamp out bullying in Sandwell schools. The team visited 10 schools, both secondary and primary, across the borough.

Councillor Hackett, cabinet member for children's services, said: "Although Anti-Bullying Week is a time to highlight this issue I want to make sure it remains a priority."

Boy, 16, charged after gun found

A TEENAGER has been charged with possessing a loaded handgun after officers stopped a car in Great Barr.

The 16-year-old from Woking, who cannot be named, was arrested in Old Horns Crescent, just after midnight on November 15.

A 17-year-old from Birmingham was also arrested and has been charged with possession of a knife.

A 26-year-old from Birmingham, Mustafa Ali, was charged with having a gun and ammunition and Class A drugs after a search of his home in Meadowsweet Avenue, Kings Norton.

Pair charged over supermarket theft

TWO men from Smethwick have been charged over the theft of a purse from a pensioner in a supermarket.

Police shared CCTV footage after the incident in Oswestry on October 24 when two men approached an 87-year-old woman in Aldi on Oswald Road, one of them distracting her.

Catalin-mihai Verea, aged 44, of Thimblemill Road, and Florin-iulian Bajanaru, 38, of Mill Hill, have been charged with theft from a person.

They have both been bailed to appear at Telford Magistrates' Court on November 28.

Christmas event back at Valley once more

A FESTIVE event is returning to Sandwell Valley in West Bromwich.

For the second year, Christmas at the Valley will see reindeer, festive food, a small funfair and Santa arrive at the park. It runs every day from December 2 until Christmas Eve.

Admission is £11 for children aged between two and 11 who want to see Santa in his grotto, £5 for children under two, £7 for adults and children aged 12 and over and £4 for over 60s.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Art price is manic Mundi for collector

WE'VE all been there at some time or other. You put a few quid away each month, build yourself a nice little nest egg, and then the mid-life crisis beckons.

It's just the way life goes. One minute you don't have two pennies to rub together, then suddenly you think to yourself "I've got a spare £360 million knocking about in the bank earning a paltry interest rate, I think I will spend it on a picture for the dining room instead."

Well that's what seems to have happened for one person at least. Last week, a tatty and not-particularly attractive painting that might be by Leonardo Da Vinci, fetched a staggering 450 million dollars at Christies in New York. That's £360 million in real money.

Salvator Mundi, or saviour of the world

Now, I'm the first to admit I know nothing about fine art. When it comes to the masters, I'm a card-carrying philistine. I mean, The Mona Lisa? Yes, it's better than I can do, but most things are. What differentiates that from, say, the work of a good art college lecturer?

Some years ago, I saw the celebrated paintings of Dudley by J W M Turner, which used to hang in the town's art gallery before it closed. I suppose I ought to say what an uplifting and enriching experience it was, but to be honest I thought they were a bit of a mess.

I certainly prefer the work of Black Country artist, and all-round nice guy, Graham Colbourne. But while Turner's works are priceless treasures, Graham donates his to local charities. Yet even among those in the know, the £360m painting has received a distinctly lukewarm reaction.

Jason Farago, of the New York Times called it "a proficient but not especially distinguished religious picture from turn-of-the-16th-century Lombardy, put through a wringer of restorations."

What does interest me, though, is that in 1958 the same picture sold for £45, or just under a grand when you allow for inflation. Back then, it was not thought to be by Da Vinci, so the inflated price is solely about who painted it, rather than any merit it might possess.

Which is just as well, because if I wanted that on my wall, I would not be crossing the Atlantic with my chequebook. I would cut the print out of the catalogue, and head down to Wilko for a frame.

Sometimes best to leave smartphone in your pocket

Adrian Edmondson – and which Shakespearean role will be next for him?

Sathnam Sanghera – success from what was once there for many working-class kids

Theresa May – where politics is involved, there's no legal lock that can't be picked

Paramedic: No need to shame notewriter

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

PARAMEDICS on an emergency call in Birmingham found this message on their ambulance: "You may be saving lives but don't park your van in a stupid place and block my drive." A paramedic posted the note on social media. But why? We pay paramedics to save lives, not to turn their job into photo-opportunities, nor to score points off members of the public who offend them. The paramedics could not have known the mental state of the person writing the note, nor the effects on him – or on neighbourhood relationships – of blabbing it online. It may be hard to believe in this Twitter-obsessed age but there are times when the best thing you can do with your smartphone is leave it in your pocket.

EARLY-morning mumbling. I heard a radio reporter describing an increase in the number of councils enforcing debts by the use of bayonets. Bailiffs, apparently.

IT'S excellent to see Adrian Edmondson getting rave reviews as the pompous old steward Malvolio in Twelfth Night at Stratford. I had lunch with him once in a wine bar in Wolverhampton and I can't recall an interview attracting so much interest, and obvious affection, from customers. It was inevitable that The Young Ones generation would eventually make it to the classical stage; Lenny Henry once told me his dream was to play Malvolio. And then he went off and did a memorable Othello instead. And what Shakespearean role will next beckon Mr Edmondson, still best remembered for those frenetic frying-pan fights with Rik Mayall? Bottom, perhaps?

IF Moscow really is planting fake news to bring down the West, expect it to be a well-concealed operation. You know how it is. You open one Russian troll and there's another troll inside.

THANKS for your memories of words spoken by teachers many years ago which have stuck in your memory. A reader who taught geography for 40 years describes asking one of his former pupils what, if anything, he remembered about his lessons. "I was hoping for some profound geographical memory," he says. Instead, the pupil recalled: "I spilt some ink on the classroom carpet and you called me a berk".

AND before some of you of a certain age reach for the keyboard for a good harrumph, I am ahead of you. Carpet in the classroom? Luxury.

I WROTE recently about the Co-op Bank no longer supplying addressed envelopes for customers to send their credit-card payments. A reader asks: "When did banks do anything to help their customers?" The common view of business, he says, is that their idea of "helping" customers is to make it increasingly difficult to contact them by letter or phone. If you're not on email, you're stuffed.

UNDER the headline "CofE to allow boys to wear dresses," the latest Private Eye magazine pokes fun at the Church of England which has suggested children should be able to "try out the many cloaks of identity," with little boys being allowed to wear tutus and girls to wear tool belts if they wish. The Eye makes the point that CofE clergy are regularly seen in elaborate "non-gender" vestments. This surely rings a bell with older Eye readers who recall a classic 1986 front cover during the furious debate on female ordination. It showed three smiling bishops in their magnificent flowing robes with the caption: "Who needs women priests when they've got us?"

I WATCHED The Boy with the Topknot (BBC2), Sathnam Sanghera's tale of growing up in Wolverhampton in a family stalked by mental illness. Later, I picked up the copy of his book he presented to me nine years ago. In the acknowledgments he noted: "I would like to thank Peter Rhodes . . . for giving me my first break in journalism." I'm proud of helping this gifted young writer to get started in his career although, to be honest, I can't recall doing much more than offering a few tips. The real leap forward in Sathnam Sanghera's life came from something once available to millions of bright working-class kids. A grammar-school education.

FASCINATING to see Theresa May "locking in" the timing of Britain leaving the EU by writing the departure date into law. I seem to recall that the timing of general elections was locked into law, setting them at five-yearly intervals, until Mrs May thought a snap election would be a good idea. When politics is involved, there ain't a legal lock that can't be picked.

HOWARDS End. That's the correct title. No apostrophe. I can't explain it either. Nor can I explain why a TV series has been made when a perfectly fine movie of Howards End already exists.

TALKING POINT

Kindness can create a lasting memory

Why do we always hear 'there's a lot of bad 'uns out there'? Yes I am sure that is the case but there are also a lot of good 'uns as well, so let's hear more about them instead.

It is a shame that sometimes it does take something bad to happen to really show the true character of people.

Often the people you think will be there by your side disappear into thin air, but maybe somebody you feel you hardly know, or don't know at all, goes above and beyond.

And with all the awful atrocities this year, somewhere, among all the tragedy and sadness, there are tales of heroism, kindness, on both a small and major scale. And sometimes it is the people you think least likely to step up – people dropping kids at school, on their way to work, popped out to get a paper, or just on a night out with mates – who step in to help. And even if, at the time, the help seemed minimal, it is how it makes the victim feel – supported, not alone.

There was an incident recently which summed up how a little thought can go such a long way. My daughter-in-law was on the motorway when the exhaust dropped off her car. With two children in the back of the car she quickly pulled onto the hard shoulder and rang for help.

The highway patrol turned up to advise and luckily she had breakdown cover.

So it was a case of waiting, probably for the best part of an hour, on the hard shoulder. As advised they got out of the car and stood outside.

It was cold, windy and wet and trying to keep two children warm and a two-year-old from straying into danger is no mean feat as the cars race by. She called us from the roadside, scared and cold.

Cars sped past but one kind man pulled over and offered her drinks and crisps for the kids and a coat to keep them warm.

It probably cost him next to nothing but the difference that made to the situation was immense. When she safely arrived at her mum's after having her car towed there, she called us to say all was fine.

And the thing she most remembered was not the fear and cold but the fact that somebody had stopped to help. A little kindness, a lasting memory.

Her mum put something on Facebook, and I hope he saw it, or somebody who knows him told him, as he deserves praise for what he did.

OK you might say a small gesture – crisps and drinks don't cost a lot – but for those few minutes the situation changed from despair to a warm glow at somebody's kindness. So you see, there are a lot of good people out there.

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Hole lot of love for stationary invention

IT'S the small things that change lives for the greater good, things like the humble mousetrap, or the corkscrew.

The other day we celebrated the 131st anniversary of the hole punch. Back in 1886 a German office supplier and inventor called Friedrich Soennecken designed and made the perfect tool that was to revolutionise document storage globally. Having conquered the hole problem, he came up with the ring binder, and today these two innovations can be seen on office shelves worldwide. Two years after these new office items were adopted, the Jack the Ripper murders made world headlines.

The Whitechapel area that borders the city of London suffered the grisly deaths of five prostitutes, and so started the long slow process of establishing the identity of the murderer.

All the many thousands of pages of statements and observations were recorded by hand written documents, and on early crude typewriters, and all had to be filed away and stored.

The hole punch and ring binder now came into its own.

Even though the computer has taken over the job of storing data, when the system crashes, and the data is lost, dusty files will be retrieved from long forgotten basement storage facilities.

TONY LEVY
Wednesfield

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Walsall Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
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Stop the sniping at Mrs May

IS it only me who is fed up to the back teeth with the media and its constant sniping at Prime Minister Theresa May?

She has a difficult enough job without TV and newspapers constantly speculating how long she will last as PM and how weak her Government position is.

We are at a vital time in our country's history when we are on the verge of setting the UK free from the yoke of a bullying EU who, instead of having meaningful talks, keep repeating that the UK must make itself 'clearer'.

This is a euphemism for them saying they want us to continue paying for their lavish excesses.

Leave Mrs May alone and get behind the Brexit negotiators.

Otherwise Theresa May could be tempted to tweet what she thinks of us all, just like the President of the United States, and we wouldn't want that, would we?

ALAN DAVIS
Darlaston

Self-help call over perils with diesel

A RECENT study showed that diesel car owners are choosing to have their diesel particulate filters (DPFs) removed to avoid costly replacements. This is not only a poor decision, but one that leads to greater costs and further problems.

Motorists found to have a Euro VI vehicle not with a DPF can be prosecuted and fined £1,000. By removing the DPF, drivers instead spread toxic pollution 20 times greater than that of a normal diesel car.

DPFs can often become blocked or too dirty to function, causing issues like higher diesel fuel consumption, lack of power or torque and elevated system pressure. Costing thousands of pounds to replace, most drivers are not aware that these issues can be avoided by regularly cleaning their DPF with a specialised liquid additive.

It is time that we called on motorists to take responsibility for regularly cleaning their DPFs.

MARK BURNETT,
VP Lubricants &
Fuel Additives,
Bilston

Poppy mark of respect

IT'S a sad indictment of our young to read that over a third of them refuses to wear a poppy because they argue it glorifies war. There is nothing glamorous about war and there are no heroes on the battlefield.

The poppy isn't a badge of honour, it's a mark of respect to those who sacrificed so much, so today's youth have a choice. But when our enemies see our young, who respect nothing, believe in nothing, do nothing, then one day they will take away that choice. Then our young will see why those who gave their lives thought freedom was worth fighting for.

S T VAUGHAN
Birmingham

Don't let the EU catch on

PETER Rhodes says the internet was an extension of the market place. Now you need an account, password, and a plethora of personal details before they will do business with you. Heaven help us if the EU latch onto this.

ROBERT WHITE
Wigmore

President Ricky Jackson with long-serving member Dave Oakley

Sylvia and Tony Maidment from Stourbridge

Jay Adkins from Kidderminster with his van

Performing on the night is Thom Peterson

Shane McDermott, of Penkridge, and Mark Harrington,Wolverhampton

David Oakley with a pic of him aged 17

At front – David Oakley, Mark Harrington, Ricky Jackson and Adam Cooper

Picture of the Circle founder Neville Sackville

Magical way to mark 70 years

IT was started way back in 1947 when a year's membership and joining fee cost just 52.5p.

Now, 70 years on, the Wolverhampton Circle of Magicians is marking its anniversary.

The group, which has more than 50 members, hosted an event to celebrate the occasion. It was held at the ECC Sports and Social Club in Showell Road.

Current and former members shared memories of the group, also showing off photographs and tricks.

The club began as magic took a hold of the country following the Second World War.

A group of magicians led by Donald Crombie, a solicitor based in Wolverhampton, first met on November 19,1947 and founded the Wolverhampton Circle of Magicians.

The vice president was Jasper Maskelyne. Over its history it has included famous magicians including Len Belcher, who joined in 1948 and was the author of three books on magic.

Tony Shelley, who later become president of the British Magical Society, was also a member. The club is today made up of a range of magic artists from clowns to mentalists to card dealers.

Members meet for lectures and to share magic on alternate Wednesdays at the ECC Sports & Social Club.

Those wanting to join the Circle must first present their magic before membership is granted.

Ex-Baggies captain's medal sells for £24,000

A RARE and precious gold medal awarded to former Albion captain Jesse Pennington sold for £24,000 – three times the sum expected.

The West Bromwich-born left back, affectionately known as 'Peerless Pennington', was 36 when he led the Baggies to their historic first league title in 1920.

Before the sale at Graham Budd Auctions, Mr Pennington's Football League title medal had been expected to sell for between £6,000 and £8,000. It was the most valuable item among 50 of his mementoes, including medals, caps and gold pocket watch, which sold for a total of £82,870 at the auction.

The 1920 FA Charity Shield medal Mr Pennington won with Albion sold for £6,500, six times the expected price, while the 1911-1912 FA Cup runners-up medal Mr Pennington wonfetched £7,000.

Fashion

The medals were part of one of the finest Albion collections ever to go under the hammer.

Pennington's £24,000 medal is engraved: The Football League Champions Division 1,West Bromwich Albion F.C.1919-20, J.Pennington, captain.

Albion didn't simply win the league title that season, they won it in record-breaking fashion.Their 104 goals in 42 league matches and their points total of 60 set new records.

In 1919-1920 there were only 44 teams in the Football League – 22 teams in the First Division and 22 teams in the Second Division. Wolves were in the Second Division that season. Pennington made 455 league appearances for Albion and he also played 25 times for England. In his final international, in 1920, he captained England when he was 36 and 231 days making him, at that time, England's oldest capped outfield player.

In a poll conducted in 2004 to mark Albion's 125th anniversary, Pennington was named as one of the club's 16 greatest players.

He was born at West Bromwich on August 23,1883, and died in 1970, aged 87. His parents, William and Mary Ann Pennington, were also born at West Bromwich. William Pennington was an iron worker. In the 1901 census, Jesse is described as a hammer driver but that was before he took up football full time.

West Bromwich Albion confirmed it did not purchase the medals and said it was not aware any of its members had decided to bid for the memorabilia.

Albion's Jesse Pennington

A Baggies badge in the sale

Gold league winners medal

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The book can be pre-ordered at http://actionforrefugees.bigcartel.com/product/this-cookbook-belongs-to-us, or bought from a range of stockists in the area, and will be sold at craft fairs in time for Christmas. The pre-order cost is £10 (£12.50 afterwards) with all profits going towards the Aegean Solidarity Network and the vital projects they support.

All money raised goes towards supporting refugees.

Chief welcomes move to boost Metro line

SANDWELL Council's regeneration chief has welcomed the announcement about a £250 million grant being awarded to boost the Midland Metro network.

West Midlands Mayor Andy Street made the announcement and said it would be 'just the first' in a host of ambitious plans to revitalise the West Midlands economy.

Councillor Paul Moore, the cabinet member for regeneration, said: "This announcement is great news for the people of Sandwell.

"It places the borough at the very heart of the rail and Metro network. It will be a catalyst for new homes and employment along the route and give our residents easy access to jobs and services throughout the West Midlands, to Birmingham Airport and to HS2."

Meanwhile, Mr Street hailed the Government's decision to award the West Midlands Combined Authority a grant to start work on the tram line between Brierley Hill and Wednesbury.

And the Conservative Mayor said that he was now committed to pushing for more funding to get other transport schemes off the ground.

West Midlands Mayor Andy Street

Mr Street made the Metro extension his number one transport priority and had lobbied the Government for funding even before he was elected as Mayor in May.

"The critical thing is that's not the end," he said. "This is just the first major step. We have got other Metro extensions, and other investments in rapid buses, so we must continue to assemble the case for more transport investment. We have got to start thinking about how we can put those things together."

Other transport schemes in the works include Metro extensions to Edgbaston and Curzon Street in Birmingham, along with a proposal to extend the line to Birmingham Airport.

The West Midlands was the only region to be guaranteed its transport funding ahead of the Budget, which took place yesterday, Wednesday.

Mr Street has also bid for money from the housing infrastructure fund, although he says he does not expect an announcement regarding that grant in tomorrow's Budget.

"We can be really clear on this. We put our bids in for the housing deal and the housing infrastructure fund, along with other combined authorities," he said.

"We always expected they were not going to be announced in the Budget. That is more likely to come in January as it is taking time to assess. It is an ambitious combined bid."

Amy cuts in with kind gesture for sufferers

Amy Patel, with some of the hair she had cut off during Children In Need, to help children suffering from hair loss

A KIND-HEARTED Walsall schoolgirl has raised more than £500 for charity after cutting off more than 16 inches of her hair. Amy Patel, from Tipton, had the chop last Friday by Becky Austin, from Clippers Hair Salon, in Wednesbury.

Her hair will now be donated to The Little Princess Trust, which provide wigs for children suffering from hair loss. The 11-year-old, who attends Queen Mary's High School, in Walsall, also took part in the cut for Children in Need. Proud parents Anita and Ashok Patel said: "Amy had previously donated more than eight inches of hair when she was just eight years old.

"She vowed to repeat it again after feeling proud and inspired at the sense of helping other children. In addition to raising the money, Amy donates her hair to Little Princess Trust who make wigs for children who have lost their hair during cancer treatment. We are both so proud of her."

Road ban driver in car chase locked up

A BANNED motorist who led police on an early morning high speed chase through the Black Country has been jailed.

Erris Korra drove into trouble when he raced across a junction in front of a police patrol at 4.30am, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told. But the 23-year-old ignored their order to stop.

He then accelerated away down Throne Road, Oldbury on March 21. Police followed as the VW Golf, with two passengers on board, hit speeds of 78mph in a 30 zone while hurtling along residential streets towards Tividale, said Mr Patrick Sullivan, prosecuting.

The car went through a red traffic light and careered round blind bends on the wrong side of the road, continued the prosecutor.

After travelling along Oakham Road, Tividale into Blackacre Road, Dudley, Korra found his path blocked by a stationary car and swerved onto the pavement in a bid to get past.

But the three mile chase came to a standstill when the VW got stuck between a lamp post and a garden wall.

By John Scott

Albanian-born Korra from Bush Avenue, Smethwick, made a final attempt to escape justice by claiming to have been a passenger in the car and to have only switched to the driver's seat after the VW stopped.

But he was sent to the crown court for sentencing after being convicted by magistrates of dangerous driving and driving while disqualified. Mr Andrew Molloy, defending, conceded: "This was a deplorable piece of driving. It was ridiculous of him to think he could get away with it."

Recorder Justin Wigoder sent Korra to prison for six months and banned him from driving for a further three years on his release.

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Firm's safety standards will be monitored

The2 Sisters plant in West Bromwich

AN MP says bosses at the embattled2 Sisters Food Group must oversee a wholesale change in its health and safety policy.

A parliamentary inquiry into the firm carried out in the wake of an undercover investigation at its West Bromwich plant has found its past record was 'far from pristine'.

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee found problems at the firm were 'not a one-off' and questions needed 'to be asked of its corporate government structure'.

Ranjit Singh Boparan, 2 Sisters owner, has said changes will be made to food safety requirements as a result of the probe.

But West Bromwich West MP Adrian Bailey called for 2 Sisters bosses to prove 'its whole culture has completely changed'.

He said: "The management has made promises and do seem to have made some improvements.

"But at the end of the day they really need to demonstrate that the whole culture has completely changed, and they're putting health and safety at the forefront of their policies for the future."

Owner Ranjit Singh Boparan

"Unless they do that the future of the company could be in jeopardy.

"In order to win back that trust and re-establish themselves they're going to have a huge change of culture – and really not just to be acceptable but to demonstrate they're leaders."

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee chairman Neil Parish said: "We are pleased Mr Boparan has written to the committee and restated his commitment to improving standards at 2 Sisters production facilities.

"The commitments are on the public record and we will be closely monitoring their implementation with a view to investigating further if required."

Assurances

"It is important consumers in both the UK and in our vital export markets feel confident in the quality of our food standards.

"We have made it quite clear we take his assurances very seriously. We will be closely monitoring their implementation."

A spokesman for 2 Sisters said: "We note the content of the report and look forward to updating the committee on further progress in the new year."

Incompetent burglar caught out by home surveillance cameras

A BUNGLING burglar who has never taken anything during a string of crimes has been jailed for two years and five months.

Terrence Clarke, of Hamstead Road, Great Barr, has been convicted of attempting to break into at least seven properties in 14 years but has always left empty-handed, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Mr Simon Hanns, prosecuting, said the 53-year-old targeted a Hamstead Road address in the early hours of September 28. "He went into the porch, tried the front door and attempted to get in, but could not gain entrance," said Mr Hanns.

He added the sophisticated CCTV system had taken Clarke's picture and emailed it to the homeowner, who was away at the time.

The photo was put on Facebook and Clarke was identified by both a former relative and a police officer who had played rugby with him.

Clarke admitted trespass with intent to burgle and asked for another to be taken into consideration. Miss Naomi Nelson-Cofie, defending, said: "He does not want to provide an explanation or mitigation as to why he committed these offences.Something in his life went wrong but he will not say what.

He just wants to get on, complete his sentence and restart his life."

Forkers celebrates with new head office

FAMILY-RUN civil and ground engineering contractors Forkers has celebrated 45 years in business with the opening of its new head office building in West Bromwich.

There are now 60 people working in Golds Green House at the junction of Shaw Street and Harvills Hawthorn. Managing director Peter Watson said it represented a £1.5 million investment for the firm.

By John Corser

"As we have grown we had exceeded the capacity of the building and had to have some offices above our workshops and in mobile buildings," he explained.

The extension, which was built onto the original building, was completed in July and has given the firm 13,000 sq ft of space over two floors and has also seen improvements to the car park and refurbishment of the old offices.

Largest

Forkers, which was started in 1972 by Paddy Forker after several years working as a specialist tunnelling subcontractor, is now the largest mine working stabilisation contractor in the UK. "To be still going strong after 45 years is a great testament to the strength of the business, which is still very much a family-owned business," said Mr Watson.

The company was originally formed in Mere Green, Sutton Coldfield. and made the move to its present home in 1988. Initially it was primarily a West Midlands business but it has expanded geographically over the years. Forkers, which also has a small office in Grangemouth in Scotland, now employs 175 in total with most of those working out on sites nationwide.

A range of clients, former and retired colleagues were invited to West Bromwich on November 9 for the 45th anniversary open afternoon and official opening of the head office. The guests also included the Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Ahmadul Haque.

"It was great to see so many people who have supported us through the years," said Mr Watson.

Forkers has seen turnover grow from £25m to £30m this year and Mr Watson said the hope was to grows that even further to £35m in 2018.

It has extended its operation into a wider range of market sectors and continues to look to widen its client base. "We now do a range of work for developers and other main contractors," explained Mr Watson.

Manor memories plea

PEOPLE who have lived in, worked at at or simply visited a historic West Bromwich building before 2009 are being asked for their memories.

It is part of a new museum-led project.

Councillor Syeda Khatun, deputy leader of Sandwell Council, said: "Staff are really keen on recording the recent history of the building."

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Dave hits right chord to back appeal

Flamboyant Slade rocker Dave Hill is backing the Chronicle and Express & Star's Feed a Family campaign

IN the words of that famous song, 'It's Christmaaaas!', and now Slade guitarist is following on from those heady days of his band's domination of the festive season, by backing our Feed a Family This Christmas appeal.

Dave said he would be backing the appeal by the Express & Star and Chronicle, with its festive appeal to support the county's vulnerable at Christmas.

The 71-year-old added: "Anything to do with a good cause like this, I'm happy to support. It's really good that the paper is doing this."

We are collecting donations of non-perishable food which will be handed to food banks and other charitable organisations across the region.

THE DROP-OFF POINTS:
Express & Star Wolverhampton, 51-53 Queen Street, WV1 1ES; Express & Star Cannock/Walsall office, Queen Square, Cannock WS11 1EA; The Saddlers Centre, Walsall town centre.

DONATIONS CAN ALSO BE DROPPED OFF AT:
Waitrose Wolverhampton, Penn Road, WV2 4NJ; The Midcounties Co-operative Food Store Codsall, 28-32 Wood Lane/Bakers Way, Codsall WV8 1DB. Donations dropped off at those will go to The Well.

Readers can donate festive food, , as well as basics. Non-food items such as toiletries, baby supplies, new socks and small presents are also welcome.

Good causes set to benefit are The Well (Home of Wolverhampton Food Bank), Wolverhampton's the Good Shepherd Ministry, the Black Country Food Bank, the Smethwick Food Bank, Walsall North Food Bank and Cannock and District Food Bank.

The appeal will also support The Haven, which helps women and children affected by domestic violence.

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Conwoman wanted for fraud goes on the run

A CONWOMAN who splashed out on a lavish lifestyle and holidays abroad using money swindled out of trusting 'customers' has absconded – leaving her two accomplices to take the rap in court.

Leah Farley failed to appear at Birmingham Crown Court for sentencing.

Police believe she may have skipped the country and have issued a warrant for the 29-year-old's arrest. Anyone with information is asked to call 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Farley, formerly of Bodenham Road, Smethwick, was uncovered as the ringleader of scams involving rental properties and online sales of electronic goods. There may be up to 400 victims.

She was arrested in September 2015 and in January pleaded guilty, with co-defendants Martie Verdie and Emran Meah also arrested.

Farley, who was on benefits, recruited the pair to help her set up fake sales profiles on property rental websites. She also manipulated friends, family and a man with learning difficulties into having money paid into their accounts – saying it was helping her receive benefits for her children.

Verdie, 26, from Summerfield Crescent, Smethwick, was jailed for 52 weeks after admitting conspiring to commit fraud by false representation. Defending, Mr Graham Henson said: "The money was put into my client's account but for her direct benefit."

Meah, 22, formerly of Pershore Road, Birmingham, was fined £3,000 and ordered to carry out 240 hours unpaid work following a five-day trial. Defending, Mr Meyrick Williams said he was involved only in the tail end of the conspiracy.

Leah Farley

Martie Verdie

Emran Meah

Jobless rate falls yet again across the West Midlands

UNEMPLOYMENT continued to fall in the West Midlands in the three months to September with 8,000 fewer out of work.

The 155,000 registered as unemployed represents a regional rate of 5.5 per cent – the joint highest in the UK – the employment rate of 72.4 per cent is the second lowest in the country.

Nationally unemployment was down by 59,000 to 1.4 million, the lowest figure in more than 12 years with a rate of 4.3 per cent, says the Office for Nationals Statistics. Nationally, those claiming unemployment-related benefits, increased by 1,100 to 806,100.

For the West Midlands it was down 1,295 to 84,620, 2.3 per cent of the working population. The biggest falls were of 115 in both Wolverhampton and Sandwell.Wolverhampton's total stood at 8.605 (4.1 per cent) and Sandwell's at 6,950 (3.4 per cent).

There was a fall of 110 in Walsall to 4,775 (2.8 per cent), but Dudley saw a rise of 95 to 5,975 (3.1 per cent).

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Currying favour in top restaurant competition

Deepram Kanswal, Gurbir Singh, general manager Sharawan Bagoriya and Ganga Ram Bhatt at Journeys

TWO Sandwell restaurants have curried favour with readers in a newspaper competition.

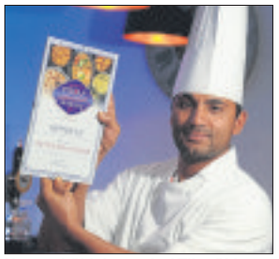
Journeys and The New Hen and Chickens claimed the borough's top two spots in the Indian Restaurant of the Year, run by The Chronicle's sister publication The Express & Star.

Gurbir Singh and Ranjit Singh-Kad, business partners at Journeys, in Oldbury, only opened their doors in September but have already impressed judges with their 'authentic taste of Indian'. Gurbir, 33, said: "We've had a very positive response.We're concentrating on giving an authentic taste of Indian food of all the regions."

A 10-strong team have helped shape the venue into an award-winning eatery – and its owners believe there's truly nothing else like it in the UK.

Coming in second place was family-run The New Hen and Chickens, in Hill Top, West Bromwich, owned by Rana Johal, 50. A former pub, opened just three months ago by Rana Johal, 50, won over judges with its decorative touches and speciality dishes.

Major Curry Affair in Dudley Port came third.



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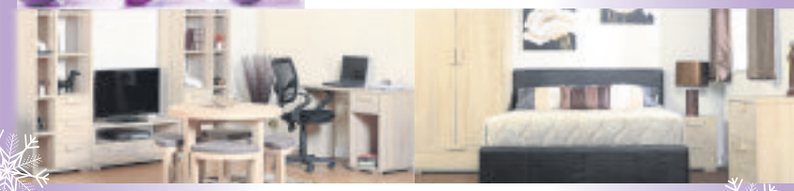

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On 25-26 November there is a Christmas Craft Market and Teenage Market the chance to buy a unique handmade gifts and enjoy seasonal entertainment, this a joint event with the White House Cone.

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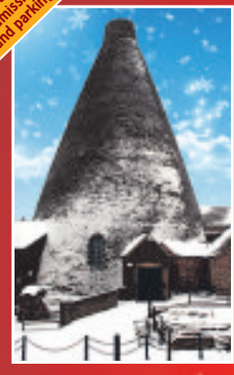

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Why Anton's in the mood for singing

We start with a moment described perfectly accurately and unlasciviously on YouTube as this: Ruth Langsford rides Anton Du Beke.

For those just back from a long holiday in Outer Mongolia, we'll recap. At the start of the month, Strictly's Anton Du Beke unexpectedly found himself pinned to the ground beneath the beautiful, perfectly-manicured Singapore-born presenter. And then she sort of wriggled a bit. And shimmied. Jeez.

Anton laughs. No doubt he's recounted that moment dozens of times, but he's game again this morning. Was he horrified when the two of them went down?

He laughs again. "No, I told Ruth it had been her best move."

There's a pause. Then we both laugh.

"It was one of those things. It was not her fault. Everything goes into slow motion when things like that happen.

"You think: 'I've got this, I'll just adjust.' Then it's 'Jesus, I don't think I've got this. And you wait for the ground to arrive at your back side.'"

Anton thought it was a hoot when it happened – and still does.

"It was hilarious. It was one of the funniest moments ever on strictly. The crowd went mad."

We have more to talk about, however, like Anton's forthcoming tour and his decision to try to emulate his Rat Pack heroes like Frank and Sammy D.

Anton, TV's most sartorial man, is The Entertainer. And in addition to tripping the light fantastic on Strictly, he's been recording a debut album in the studio, From The Top.

Best moves – Anton with Strictly dance partner Ruth Langsford

PASSION

"I'm so excited to announce my debut album. It's been a passion project of mine for years to be able to do something like this.

"I hope people enjoy it. I've loved every second of it. There's some old songs. Some new songs. And definitely some songs you can dance to."

It features classics like Putting On The Ritz, Fly Me To The Moon, Don't Rain On My Parade and It's The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year.

It's something he'd wanted to do forever, but took a while to bring together.

"I'm never quite sure how one gets from Point A to Point B sometimes. The same was true when I was watching Fred Astaire when I was young, I wanted to be like him but I wasn't sure of the path from a Church Hall in Kent to becoming Fred Astaire. And with music, I've never been sure how to get from the shower to singing Fly Me To The Moon in a studio with a great producer."

Anton worked on the record with Polydor and he was delighted with their support.

"You just want someone to say to you: 'Listen, it's great, keep going.' You get self conscious and you don't really know whether it's any good. But it's been a wonderful experience.

"It's the music of my life. It's music I loved growing up with and music I danced to. Being able to sing it and get others dancing is the greatest joy."

Anton grew up watching the greats. He was enchanted by Sammy Davis Jr, Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra as well as the wonderful arrangements by Nelson Riddle and Quincy Jones. He worked with a 36-piece orchestra on his album to create new arrangements and the results are plain to see.

Anton is habitually tied up during the run-in to Christmas, what, with Strictly an all. But he'll be road testing some of the songs when he tours the UK from January to March.

"I'll be back on tour after the new year and I'll be coming back to the Symphony Hall in Birmingham – I do love that venue. I'll be dancing and singing, as I normally do. But if anybody's been to see me on tour, they know I sing a bit both on Strictly and on my own tours.

"I keep saying this, I don't want it to sound odd, but the sound of the album is incredible. It's such a brilliant sound they put together in the studio."

The team who worked with Anton to produce his album blew him away. They were simultaneously supportive and honest, scrutinising everything he did to make sure he reached his potential. "I worked with a guy called Brian Rawlings, who has worked with the greats. He's done projects with Andrea Boccelli, Cher, everyone. When I went to the studio, the walls were lined with platinum discs."

> *It was one of the funniest moments ever on Strictly. The crowd went mad*

So does Anton want to follow in those footsteps? Does he want to be lining his own walls with a bunch of silver, gold and platinum discs? You can bet he does.

"I hope it goes absolutely massive, I hope I get a platinum disc and people say it's incredible. But we'll have to wait and see whether that actually happens, we'll have to wait and see. I love it so much that I want other people to love it.

"This type of big band music is still being done and has stood the test of time. We'll have to wait and see in the future what still gets repeated in the same way from today's era. The songs I've re-recorded are great in their own right. The hard bit for me was choosing what to leave out."

In the final analysis, making people happy is what The Entertainer is all about. And he plans to keep dancing for as long as possible. "For now, I still love dancing. Doing the paso doble and samba and ripping my trousers off – I live for those moments. Or dancing with Nadiya and doing a beautiful foxtrot while Seal is singing: those are the moments you live for."

Andy Richardson

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.

Festive favourite The Nutcracker

Christmas cracker of a ballet is a traditional treat

Birmingham Royal Ballet's annual festive treat, The Nuctracker, opens at Birmingham Hippodrome tomorrow night (Friday).

Sir Peter Wright's magical production runs until December 13 and has been an annual seasonal tradition since the company moved from London and took on the city's name more than 25 years ago.

This world-acclaimed production with its classic story of an incredible Christmas journey, features glorious dancing and instantly recognisable romantic music from Tchaikovsky.

Join Clara as she is swept into an enchanting winter wonderland of whirling snowflakes, a handsome prince, wicked rats and a Sugar Plum Fairy.

It is spectacular with lavish costumes and monumenal sets, and amazing effects including a Christmas tree that grows before your eyes and Clara's flight on the back of a swan to a magical land.

The Nutcracker has captured the hearts and imaginations of generations of theatregoers, becoming an annual fixture at the Hippodrome, which is Birmingham Royal Ballet's home theatre. In fact, Christmas in Birmingham just wouldn't be the same without it.

In this most festive of ballets 60 dancers and a full orchestra – the Royal Ballet Sinfonia – combine to make the perfect Christmas treat for the entire family.

This production with exquisite designs by John Macfarlane is acclaimed as one of the best in the world.

Grease is still the one that you want

Grease is the word at Wolverhampton Grand where the latest tour of the much-loved rock 'n' roll musical arrives on Monday and will run until Saturday, December 2.

Tom Parker, pictured, formerly of boy band The Wanted, is making make his musical theatre debut as Danny Zuko, the role made famous in the movie by the young John Travolta.

Danielle Hope, who was Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz at the London Palladium after winning BBC TV's Over The Rainbow, will step into Olivia Newton-John's high heel shoes as Sandy.

Wisecracking Rizzo will be played by EastEnders and The Bill star Louisa Lytton, one of the youngest Strictly Come Dancing competitors in 2006. George Olney is Teen Angel/Vince Fontaine.

Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey's musical, set in an American high school during the rock 'n' roll era, features such songs as You're The One That I Want, Summer Nights, Greased Lightnin' and Hopelessly Devoted To You. It has been choreographed by Arlene Phillips and directed by David Gilmore, who was also at the helm for stage versions of Happy Days and Footloose.

This production opened in the West End, where it had a six year run, and has toured ever since.

It's a Cruella winter at the Rep

Birmingham Rep is set for a paw-some festive season with The Hundred and One Dalmatians on stage from Thursday (November 30) to January 13. Debbie Isitt (Nativity!) adapts the family favourite story by Dodie Smith, which was turned into an animated classic by Disney. It is brought to life on stage with puppetry devised by director Tessa Walker and designer Jamie Vartan. Former Birmingham student Gloria Onitiri, above, makes her Rep debut as wicked Cruella de Vil.

Rag'N'Bone Man is only Human at Civic

One of the breakout stars of 2017, Rag'N'Bone Man, has sold out the Civic Hall on Monday for his first Wolverhampton gig. Without doubt 2017 has been his year, emerging from the Brighton music scene, his debut album has been a huge hit worldwide, containing the international hit Human, which went to Number 1 on iTunes in more than 40 countries.

The harmonious sound of America folk-rockers Fleet Foxes can be heard at the Civic tomorrow night (Friday), whilst punk veterans Sham 69 are at the Slade Rooms. There's a sell-out again at the venue on Saturday for former leading members of The Beautiful South, Paul Heaton and Jacqui Abbott.

Highlights at the Robin 2 in Bilston include '80s duo China Crisis on Sunday and former Zombies frontman Colin Blunstone on Monday.

SATURDAY'S TV NOVEMBER 25

CHOICE

Joe Orton

Joe Orton Laid Bare (BBC2, 9pm)

Documentary exploring the wit, work and world of Joe Orton, the Leicester-born playwright and author whose flourishing literary career was cut short when he was killed by his boyfriend Kenneth Halliwell in 1967. Fifty years after his demise, this film charts Orton's meteoric rise to fame following his imprisonment in 1962 for defacing library books. Orton believed his sentence was unduly harsh, and had more to do with the fact he was homosexual than the crime itself, but his time in prison allowed him to crystallise his distinctive worldview. Here, excerpts from his stage and TV plays, along with his personal diaries, outline his outrageous perspective, and the circumstances of his death are re-examined.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nigella: At My Table. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Rugby League World Cup. **2.00** Live International Rugby Union. Scotland v Australia (Kick-off 2.30pm). **4.30** Final Score. **5.15** Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme. **5.45** BBC News. **5.55** Regional Programme.

6.00 Pointless Celebrities. Simon Wood, Jane Devonshire, Lee McQueen, Yasmina Siadatan, Sam Bailey, Michelle McManus, George Sampson and Jermaine Jackson take part in a "TV Winner" edition of the quiz show.

6.50 Strictly Come Dancing. The seven remaining pro-celebrity duos return to the Elstree studio, in the wake of their expedition to the Lancashire coast last weekend for the annual Blackpool Tower special. The competition will be no less intense on coming back to familiar territory, though, as the celebrities and their seasoned dancing partners draw closer to the grand final. Judges Shirley Ballas, Bruno Tonioli, Darcey Bussell and Craig Revel Horwood are on hand to assess each pairing's skills as they all tackle the Paso Doble at the same time in a "Pasodoblathon". As ever, though, the impressing the judges is only half of the battle, as the stars must also gain the approval of the viewing public, who are given a chance to have their say over who should stay in the running.

8.10 Michael McIntyre's Big Show. EastEnders star Danny Dyer hands over his phone in Celebrity Sent to All, and Gary Barlow puts in a special appearance. Plus, performances by Russell Kane and Clean Bandit.

9.10 Casualty. Connie attends her first day of chemotherapy, and when Ethan tries to take the lead in her absence, his overly thorough approach causes massive delays.

10.00 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.

10.20 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, which included Liverpool v Chelsea, and Tottenham Hotspur v West Bromwich Albion.

11.45 The NFL Show.

12.15 Film: Obsessed. (2009) **2.00** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.05** BBC News.

BBC2

7.30 Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. **8.00** Deadly 60. (R) **8.30** Show Me What You're Made Of: UK. **9.00** Saturday Mash-Up! **11.00** Natural World: Chimps of the Lost Gorge. (R) **12.00** Tom Kerridge's Best Ever Dishes. (R) **12.30** Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well. (R) **1.00** Coast. (R) **1.20** Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers: Talking Pictures. (R) **2.10 Film:** Daddy Long Legs. (1955) Romantic musical, starring Fred Astaire and Leslie Caron. **4.15** Britain Afloat. **4.45** Live International Rugby Union. Wales v New Zealand (Kick-off 5.15pm).

7.30 International Rugby Union. England v Samoa. Sara Orchard presents action from the autumn international at Twickenham, which saw England attempt to extend their unbeaten run against the Samoans.

8.30 Dad's Army. Mainwaring camps the platoon in the middle of a firing range, forcing Corporal Jones to make a desperate effort to raise the alarm. (R)

9.00 Joe Orton Laid Bare. Documentary charting the rise to fame of playwright and author Joe Orton, whose literary career was cut short when he was killed by his boyfriend Kenneth Halliwell in 1967.

10.20 QI XL. Sally Phillips, Ross Noble and Nish Kumar join regular panellist Alan Davies and host Sandi Toksvig for an extended version of the comedy quiz show. This time, the topic is 'Odorous and Odious'. During the course of the show, the panellists learn why the world's second-smelliest man is so frustrated. As ever, correctness and even intelligence go out of the window, as the fiendishly difficult questions lead to points being awarded for the answers its questionmaster finds most interesting, as opposed to correct.

11.05 Insert Name Here. Nish Kumar, Kate Williams, Katherine Ryan and Gabby Logan join host Sue Perkins and captains Richard Osman and Josh Widdicombe as the comedy quiz returns. (R)

11.35 Film: Albert Nobbs. (2011) A woman living in disguise as a man in 19th-century Ireland decides to find a wife after a meeting with a fellow cross-dresser. Drama, with Glenn Close and Mia Wasikowska.

1.20 Film: Chances Are. (1989) **3.05** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Mission Employable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Fangbone. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.00** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Saturday Morning with James Martin. **11.25** Gino's Italian Coastal Escape. (R) **11.50** ITV News; Weather. **12.00** The X Factor. (R) **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Haydock. Coverage of this afternoon's meetings at Haydock Park and Ascot. **4.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **4.25** The Harbour. (R) **4.55** The Chase. (R) **5.55** New You've Been Framed!

6.20 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.25 ITV News; Weather.

6.35 Ninja Warrior UK. Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara host the final heat, as competitors from across the UK test their strength, speed and courage in the obstacle-course challenge. (R)

7.30 The X Factor: The Semi Finals. The conclusion of the musical talent show creeps ever closer, as the contest reaches the semi-finals. Throughout the live stages, surprise double eliminations, extra sing-offs and an increased number of public votes have tested not only the contestants' singing skills, but also their ability to master their nerves, and the pressure is bound to be higher than ever with the Grand Final taking place next weekend. Dermot O'Leary welcomes the performers back to the stage for another set, as Cowell and his fellow judges – Louis Walsh, Nicole Scherzinger and Sharon Osbourne – deliver their verdicts, before giving viewers at home a chance to have their say.

9.10 I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! Ant and Dec catch up with the celebrity castaways as their first week in the camp draws to a close, and they prepare for a Bushtucker Trial.

10.10 ITV News; Weather.

10.30 Film: Rambo: First Blood Part II. (1985) Action adventure sequel, with Sylvester Stallone.

12.20 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.05 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **6.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **6.55** Frasier. (R) **7.20** Frasier. (R) **7.45** The Big Bang Theory. **8.10** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **8.35** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.00** The Simpsons. (R) **9.25** The Simpsons. (R) **9.55** Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Practice 3 Live. The Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. **11.25** F1 Meets Niki Lauda. **11.55** Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Qualifying Live. The Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. **2.45** World's Most Expensive Cars. (R) **3.45** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.30** Best Laid Plans. **5.30** Grand Designs. (R)

6.25 Channel 4 News.

6.45 Film: The Day After Tomorrow. (2004) A climatologist warns global warming will soon result in destructive freak weather, or even another ice age. He thinks the world still has time to prepare for the worst, but the crisis happens almost immediately – and as storms, earthquakes and hurricanes strike in terrifying fashion, he races across America to rescue his son from a frozen New York. Disaster thriller, with Jake Gyllenhaal and Dennis Quaid.

9.00 Film: Ex Machina. (2015) Premiere. A computer programmer working for the world's biggest search engine is given the opportunity to spend a week at the remote home of his boss, a hi-tech genius. The break turns out to be an elaborate experiment, in which he must test the world's first truly artificial intelligence, which is housed in the body of a beautiful robot girl. Sci-fi drama, starring Domhnall Gleeson, Alicia Vikander and Oscar Isaac.

11.05 Film: Lone Survivor. (2013) Four soldiers face a battle for survival while on a mission to eliminate a terrorist leader in Afghanistan. Fact-based drama, starring Mark Wahlberg and Taylor Kitsch.

1.15 The Last Leg. American comedian Margaret Cho joins the regulars. (R) **2.10** Hollyoaks. Omnibus. Louis and Leela are frantic when baby Daniel goes missing. **4.20** Location, Location, Location. Phil Spencer helps a couple searching for a home in south-west London. (R) **5.15** Draw It! (R) **5.40 Film:** The Parent Trap. (1961) Twin sisters who want their estranged parents to get back together swap places in a ploy to reunite them. Disney comedy, with Hayley Mills in a dual role alongside Maureen O'Hara.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** The Gadget Show. (R) **11.25** Pets Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **11.55 Film:** A Christmas Reunion. (2015) **1.40 Film:** Santa Who? (2000) Family comedy, starring Leslie Nielsen. **3.25 Film:** Angels in the Snow. (2015) Family drama, starring Kristy Swanson. **4.25** 5 News Update. **4.30 Film:** Angels in the Snow. (2015) Concluded. **5.15 Film:** Love You Like Christmas. (2016) Premiere. Romantic drama, starring Bonnie Somerville and Brennan Elliott.

6.15 5 News Update.

6.20 Film: Love You Like Christmas. (2016) Concluded.

7.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. In Coventry, the sheriffs chase £10,000 owed by a publican to a contractor. The property appears to be empty, but after finding an ingenious method of entry, Matt and Garry are confronted by a surprised and angry landlord. Meanwhile, agents Max and Steve head to central London to try to recover almost £8,000 owed to a firm of accountants. (R)

8.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Agents try to recover almost £2,000 owed by the owner of a bridal shop in London, while officers in Kent chase over £4,000 of vet fees after two neighbouring dogs got into a fight. (R)

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Barnsley v Leeds United, Aston Villa v Ipswich Town and Burton Albion v Sunderland.

10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. Colin Murray introduces all the goals from Leagues One and Two, including AFC Wimbledon v Walsall, Blackburn Rovers v Bristol Rovers and Coventry City v Crawley Town.

10.30 NCIS: New Orleans. A sailor from Mississippi is murdered, and when it becomes clear the man was also a biker, the agents begin to suspect his death might be the result of an old gang rivalry.

11.25 NCIS: New Orleans. A petty officer is found dead, and the only witness to the crime is the woman's nine-year-old nephew.

12.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** When Calls the Heart. (R) **4.40** Access. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 Nature's Misfits: Natural World **8.00** The Mekong River with Sue Perkins **9.00** Witnesses: A Frozen Death **10.50** The Vietnam War **11.50** What a Performance! Pioneers of Popular Entertainment **12.50** A Blackpool Big Band Boogie: Jools Holland and His Rhythm & Blues Orchestra **1.50** Nature's Misfits: Natural World **2.50** The Mekong River with Sue Perkins **3.50** Close

ITV2

11.50 Take Me Out Celebrity Special **12.50** Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule **1.25 Film:** Beethoven's 2nd (1993) **2.25** FYI Daily **2.30 Film:** Beethoven's 2nd (1993) **3.10 Film:** Step Up (2006) **4.15** FYI Daily **4.20 Film:** Step Up (2006) **5.20** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **6.50 Film:** Inception (2010) **7.50** FYI Daily **7.55 Film:** Inception (2010) **9.40** Family Guy **10.10** I'm a Celebrity: Extra Camp **11.10** Family Guy **11.40** American Dad! **12.40** Release the Hounds **1.40** Viral Tap **2.20** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.55** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

11.10 FYI Daily **11.15 Film:** Murder on the Orient Express (1974) **12.50 Film:** Columbo: Make Me a Perfect Murder (1978) **2.50** Agatha Christie's Marple **5.00** Margery and Gladys **7.00** Midsomer Murders **11.05** The Syndicate **12.10** The Blonde Bombshell **2.10** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4

12.45 Live Darts: Players Championship Finals. Coverage of day two from Butlins Minehead. **5.00** Nijinsky's Triple Crown **5.05** Pawn Stars **7.00** Live Darts: Players Championship Finals. Coverage of day two from Butlins Minehead. **11.00 Film:** Full Metal Jacket (1987) **12.00** FYI Daily **12.05 Film:** Full Metal Jacket (1987) **1.20** The Classic Car Show **2.20** The Protectors **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

11.00 How I Met Your Mother **12.00 Film:** Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (2009) **1.50** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **2.00** The Goldbergs **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Oblivion (2013) **11.30** Gogglebox **1.35** Rude Tube **2.35** First Dates **3.30** How I Met Your Mother **4.15** Rules of Engagement

Film4

11.00 Rio (2011) **1.00** Field of Dreams (1989) **3.20** Avatar (2009) **6.30** The Riot Club Interview Special **6.40** Ender's Game (2013) **9.00** 2 Guns (2013) **11.10** Tank 432 (2015) **12.55** Immortals (2011)

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SUNDAY'S TV NOVEMBER 26

CHOICE

Guy Martin

Guy Martin vs the Robocar (Channel 4, 9pm)
According to predictions, in just over 10 years' time, half of all new cars sold will be electric and 15 per cent of them will be self-driving. But where does that leave Guy Martin? In this documentary, he tries to get to grips with autonomous vehicles by building his own robotic Ford Transit in his shed, where he discovers that the hardest part is replicating human thought. So, he travels to Budapest and the US to learn more about artificial intelligence and the morality tests the software engineers must grapple with, such as should a self-driving car save its passenger or a pedestrian in an emergency scenario. And in the ultimate test, Guy takes to the track to become the first person to pit his driving skills against an AI race car.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.30** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Fern Britton Meets Gregory Porter. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Elizabeth & Philip: Love and Duty. (R) **2.15** Mary Berry's Country House Secrets. (R) **3.15** Songs of Praise. **3.55** Alan Shearer: Dementia, Football and Me. (R) **4.55** Blue Planet II. (R) **5.55** BBC News.

6.10 Regional Programme.

6.20 Countryfile. The team visits the Cairngorns, where Joe Crowley explores Britain's largest nature reserve and one of its highest mountains, and Helen Skelton goes in search of golden eagles. Plus, Adam Henson prepares for next year's new arrivals on his farm and Tom Heap reports on the British chicken industry.

7.20 Strictly Come Dancing: The Results. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman reveal the results of last night's viewers' vote and another couple leaves the contest. Featuring a performance from Kelly Clarkson.

8.00 Blue Planet II. Footage of wildlife inhabiting underwater kelp forests, including thousands of giant cuttlefish spawning along a restricted area of rocky reef off the south coast of Australia. Males outnumber females 11 to one, which leads to fierce competition. Larger males use brute force to drive off competition, while their smaller rivals use deception by mimicking the appearance of females. The programme also features tiger sharks hunting for green turtles in fields of seagrass and spider crabs trying to avoid predators while they shed their shells.

9.00 Howards End. Margaret receives an offer which changes her plans significantly, while Evie's wedding brings the Schlegel, Bast and Wilcox families together – and drags secrets into the light.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action.

11.30 Ronny Chieng: International Student. Ronny agrees to fill in for Asher at her job.

11.55 Weather for the Week Ahead.

12.00 BBC News.

BBC2

6.05 Coast. (R) **6.50** A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.35** The Secret History of the British Garden. (R) **8.35** Countryfile. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Food & Drink. (R) **11.30** My Life on a Plate. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** International Rugby Union. (R) **2.00** Ghost Bear Family: Natural World. (R) **3.00** Demolition: The Wrecking Crew. (R) **4.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.45** Flog It! (R) **5.45** Turkey with Simon Reeve. (R)

6.45 Film: Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day. (2014) Premiere. An 11-year-old boy has a day where everything seems to go wrong, but gets no sympathy from his family. He becomes convinced that bad things only ever happen to him, but then his parents, his brother and his sister all suffer terrible days of their own. Family comedy based on Judith Viorst's series of children's books, starring Ed Oxenbould, Steve Carell and Jennifer Garner.

8.00 Robot Wars. Robots Expulsion, Coyote, Thor, Magnetar, Hobgoblin and Push to Exit battle it out for a place in the grand final. Among the players controlling the machines are self-taught engineer Ellis, and a team of schoolchildren determined to prove lack of experience is not a problem. Presented by Dara O Briain and Angela Scanlon.

9.00 Expedition Volcano. Part one of two. Documentary following scientists studying some of the world's most dangerous active volcanoes in the Congo. The series begins by exploring Nyiragongo, which has erupted twice in the last 50 years, most recently in 2002, when it devastated the nearby city of Goma. However, it lies in a region troubled by war and humanitarian crises, which has made study of the volcano difficult.

10.00 Snowfall. Lucia finds it hard to break away from her family, Teddy tries to cover Alejandro's tracks, and Franklin faces new threats. Guest starring Billy Boyd (The Lord of the Rings).

10.40 Film: John Carter. (2012) Fantasy adventure, with Taylor Kitsch and Lynn Collins.

12.40 Sign Zone: Question Time. (R)

1.45 Holby City. (R) **2.40** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Mission Employable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Ben 10. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Make It Pop. (R) **9.00** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Australian Wilderness with Ray Mears. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** Save Money: Good Food. (R) **11.30** Tipping Point. (R) **12.30** ITV News; Weather. **12.45** The X Factor: The Semi Finals. (R) **2.20** Midsomer Murders. (R) **4.10** Les Dawson Forever.

6.05 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.15 ITV News; Weather.

6.30 The Chase: Celebrity Special. Patrick Baladi, Vicky Williamson, John Craven and Kevin Eldon work as a team to secure a cash prize for charity. Presented by Bradley Walsh. Last in the series.

7.30 The X Factor: The Semi Finals. Dermot O'Leary hosts as the remaining contestants take to the stage, hoping to make it into the grand final, with judges Louis Walsh, Nicole Scherzinger, Simon Cowell and Sharon Osbourne battling it out to keep their acts in the show. This year Louis has the Boys, Nicole the Overs, Simon the Groups and Sharon the Girls.

9.00 I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! Ant and Dec give viewers at home a chance to catch up with the superstar castaways as they prepare to enter their second week in the jungle. Plus, the competition steps up a gear as the celebrities face this year's live Bushtucker Trial. In 2016, the contestants took part in the "Hungry Games" as part of the live trial, with Adam Thomas, Carol Vorderman, Danny Baker, Jordan Banjo, Ola Jordan and Wayne Bridge emerging victorious.

10.30 ITV News; Weather.

10.45 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston and Allegra Stratton. Last in the series. (R)

11.45 Road Rage Britain: Caught on Camera. (R)

12.45 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

7.55 Frasier. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Sunday Brunch. **12.00** Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Live Build-Up. A look ahead to today's Grand Prix. **12.35** Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Live. The Abu Dhabi Grand Prix (Start-time 1.00pm). **3.10** Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Live Reaction. In-depth analysis of this afternoon's race. **4.35** Speed with Guy Martin: F1 Challenge. (R) **5.35** Channel 4 News.

6.05 Film: Men in Black 3. (2012) An alien criminal escapes from a prison on the moon and goes back in time on a mission of revenge, changing the course of history. Agent J of the top-secret Earth defence organisation follows him back to 1969, and joins forces with a younger version of his mentor Agent K to set things right. Sci-fi comedy sequel, starring Will Smith, Josh Brolin and Tommy Lee Jones. Edited for language and violence.

8.00 Coastal Railways with Julie Walters. New series. The actress travels around the UK coast by train, beginning by boarding the famous Jacobite steam train for a trip along Scotland's West Highland Railway, famously featured in the Harry Potter movies. Along the way, Julie learns about herring gutting and blowing up railway lines, and meets a traditional Scottish storyteller on the Isle of Skye.

9.00 Guy Martin vs the Robocar. The presenter explores the world of automated self-driving vehicles, attempting to build one of his own in his shed. He takes a trip to Budapest for a ride in a completely autonomous vehicle, which is being tested on public roads for the first time. Finally, he heads to Silverstone, to take on a computer-controlled car in a race.

10.00 Film: RoboCop. (2014) A critically injured police officer is rebuilt as a crime-fighting cyborg, but struggles to retain free will. Sci-fi thriller remake, with Joel Kinnaman and Gary Oldman.

12.10 Film: Good Kill. (2014) Drama, starring Ethan Hawke. **2.00** The Supervet. A cocker spaniel has a bulging disc in its spine. (R) **3.00** Trump: An American Dream. (R) **3.55** Location, Location, Location. (R) **4.50** Gillette World Sport. **5.15** KOTV Boxing Weekly. **5.45** Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free. (R) **5.55** Kevin Can Wait.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.35** Wissper. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.45** Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **6.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.00** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.25** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.35** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.35** Nella the Princess Knight. (R) **8.50** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.20** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.35** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.45** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.20** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.10** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.40 Film:** A Christmas Tail. (2012) **1.20 Film:** Winter Wedding. (2017) Premiere. Romantic drama, starring Andrea Bowen. **3.10 Film:** A Christmas to Remember. (2016) Premiere. Festive romance, starring Mira Sorvino and Cameron Mathison. **4.10** 5 News Update. **4.15 Film:** A Christmas to Remember. (2016) Concluded. **4.55 Film:** Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest. (2006) Swashbuckling adventure sequel, starring Johnny Depp. **5.55** 5 News Update.

6.00 Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest. (2006) Concluded.

7.55 5 News Weekend.

8.00 Aviva Premiership Rugby Highlights. Mark Durden-Smith and David Flatman present action from the ninth round of matches, including Newcastle Falcons v Gloucester at Kingston Park, Sale Sharks v Northampton Saints at the AJ Bell Stadium and Leicester Tigers v Worcester Warriors at Welford Road.

9.00 Film: Fury. (2014) An American tank crew undertakes a final dangerous mission behind enemy lines in the last months of the Second World War. Drama, starring Brad Pitt and Shia LaBeouf.

10.00 5 News Update.

10.05 Film: Fury. (2014) Concluded.

11.35 Film: Flight of the Phoenix. (2004) A plane crashes in the desert and the survivors plan to return to civilisation by building a new aircraft from the wreckage. Adventure, starring Dennis Quaid and Tyrese Gibson.

1.40 SuperCasino. **3.10** Chris Tarrant: Extreme Railway Journeys. (R) **4.00** My Mum's Hotter Than Me! (R) **4.50** Great Artists. (R) **5.20** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Great Continental Railway Journeys **7.30** University Challenge **8.00** Nigel Kennedy at the BBC **9.00** Shark **10.00** Walrus: Two Tonne Tusker – Natural World **11.00** Naples '44: A Wartime Diary **12.20** Nigel Kennedy at the BBC **1.20** Shark **2.20** Walrus: Two Tonne Tusker – Natural World **3.20** Close

ITV2
12.30 Take Me Out **2.00** You've Been Framed and Famous! **3.05** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **4.05 Film:** Despicable Me (2010) **5.05** FYI Daily **5.10 Film:** Despicable Me (2010) **6.00 Film:** Evan Almighty (2007) **7.00** FYI Daily **7.05 Film:** Evan Almighty (2007) **8.05 Film:** Wrath of the Titans (2012) **8.55** FYI Daily **9.10 Film:** Wrath of the Titans (2012) **10.00** Family Guy **10.30** I'm a Celebrity: Extra Camp **11.30** Family Guy **12.30** American Dad! **1.30** Release the Hounds **2.25** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
12.05 Wycliffe **1.15 Film:** Columbo: How to Dial a Murder (1978) **2.50** Lewis **4.55** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Housewife, 49 **9.00** Endeavour **11.05** The Blonde Bombshell **1.15** Heartbeat **2.05** The Knock **3.55** Wycliffe **4.50** Judge Judy **5.30** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
11.40 The Darts Show **12.45** Live Darts: Players Championship Finals. Coverage of the quarter-finals from Butlins Minehead. **5.00** Pawn Stars **6.00** River Monsters **7.00** Live Darts: Players Championship Finals. Coverage of the semi-finals and final at Butlins Minehead. **11.00 Film:** Crank (2006) **12.00** FYI Daily **12.05 Film:** Crank (2006) **12.45** The Sweeney **1.45** The Avengers **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.00 Made in Chelsea **12.00** Don't Tell the Bride **1.00 Film:** Diary of a Wimpy Kid (2010) **2.55** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **3.00** The Goldbergs **4.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00 Film:** Ghostbusters II (1989) **10.05** The Big Bang Theory: Who You Gonna Call? **11.05** Gogglebox **12.10** Rude Tube **1.15** First Dates **2.20** Gogglebox **3.15** Rude Tube **3.40** Hollyoaks

Film4
11.00 Thunderbirds (2004) **12.50** The Riot Club Interview Special **1.00** The Phantom (1996) **3.00** Fletch (1985) **5.05** The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992) **6.45** Miracle on 34th Street (1994) **9.00** Cowboys & Aliens (2011) **11.20** The Lincoln Lawyer (2011)

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A transformed Jacqueline showing off her beautifully crafted new smile with her pre-treatment look inset

ATTRACTIVE, bubbly, confident and with a contagious laugh – there are simply not enough descriptive words to capture in a single sentence the experience of meeting professional chef, Jacky Standish.

Looking younger than her 57 years, Jacky has engaged on an unusual "bucket list", though she's quick to point out: "I'm definitely not dying. Quite the opposite!"

For the dog-lover, who confesses "she doesn't know who to smile at first," the list all about making up for lost time.

It's hard to imagine, this woman who laughs easily and is generous with her smiles, would ever want for anything, but reflecting on recent years she admits "there's plenty of catching up to be done."

Relaxing over a coffee, the former chef and house manager to Hagley Hall's Lord and Lady Cobham, explains that enduring decades of teeth troubles left her battling with some very dark days before receiving implant treatment at North Street Dental and Implant Clinic in Dudley.

"I was deeply ashamed of my teeth. I could cook fabulous meals for the rich and famous who regularly visited the hall. But for my own pleasure with food, it was becoming a nightmare as I found it more and more difficult to eat the meals I prepared.

"My bucket list . . . all the places I want to eat out," she muses, "and I just might cook at home and throw a dinner party . . . that sounds terribly old fashioned, doesn't it," she adds.

"I always used to find meals out with family and friends quite daunting and felt my presence compromised those with whom I was out. Of course, they'd have to find a restaurant with a menu offering something I could chew," Jacky says.

Jacky, suffered with periodontal (gum) disease for decades. "I was informed by my family dentist I would experience dental issues throughout my life.

"At one point I was attending the dentists every three months to try and control the problems, but no matter how I tried, as the years passed I lost more and more teeth," she recalls.

Jacky's confidence plummeted so badly she would walk her dog at 5am to avoid meeting people. "By my mid-50s the erosion on my confidence was as severe as the erosion on my gums," she says,

Now, with four implants retaining an upper overdenture and a partial lower traditional prosthetic, she's thrilled with her new smile. "No-one would ever know they are not my natural teeth. Out with my dog, I can now speak to people and ask 'what sort of dog have you got on your lead?'"

Now look at me!

Jacky, who recently renovated her newly-purchased bungalow, adds: "Everything was finished except a makeover of the front garden. I could have paid to have it done, but decided to invest in my teeth. It was no good having a front garden when you have no front teeth." The surgery was carried out by North Street's implant dentist Owain Rees BDS DGDP (UK) Dip Imp Dent (UCL) GDC 61576.

Summing up her experience Jacky concluded: "I wake up feeling remarkably good, my jaw sore from all the smiling. I came for an initial consultation with Steven [practice principal Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS Eng GDC 108353] and I could hardly lift my head up.

"Now look at me!"

> *"I could be helped, I could be free from pain, I could be transformed, I could have closure..."*
> Jacqueline Standish Nov. 2017

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
A Perfect Christmas, Channel 5, 3.45pm
An advertising executive walks past a display mannequin in a department store window every day. When she suffers a bad fall outside the shop, the dummy comes to life to help her. He turns out to be everything she has always wanted in a man – but she soon realises her dream does not bring her happiness. Festive fantasy, starring Claire Coffee and Ryan McPartlin. (2012)

TUESDAY
The Christmas Switch, Channel 5, 2pm
A hustler is asked to magically swap bodies with a dying man at Christmas in return for either a million dollars or having all his past sins forgiven. He chooses the money, but as he watches the other man using his body to do good deeds, he begins to reconsider what is important in his life. Fantasy, starring Brian Krause, Cedric Smith and Natasha Henstridge. (2014)

Total Recall, Friday, ITV, 11.15pm

WEDNESDAY
A Bride for Christmas, Channel 5, 11.45am
A woman swears off serious relationships after breaking off her third failed engagement, only to run into a man who seems perfect for her a month before Christmas. However, she does not realise he has made a bet with his friends that he can persuade a woman to marry him before the holiday begins. Romantic drama, with Arielle Kebbel. (2012)

THURSDAY
Seventh Son, Channel 5, 9pm
Premiere. A professional monster hunter hires a young apprentice to help him track down an evil queen. Fantasy adventure, starring Ben Barnes and Jeff Bridges. (2014)

FRIDAY
Total Recall, ITV, 11.15pm
A construction worker pays to have fake memories of a dream holiday implanted into his brain, but discovers his mind has already been tampered with – apparently to erase his true identity as a secret agent from a colony on Mars. Paul Verhoeven's sci-fi thriller, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rachel Ticotin and Michael Ironside. (1990)

PICK OF THE WEEK

Paul looks to serve up a tasty treat in new series

Say what you like about the latest Bake Off – and there are those of us who still feel nostalgic for the BBC days despite having great respect for Channel 4's handling of the series – but the latest run was an unmitigated success.

At 11 million viewers, the final was watched by the channel's biggest audience in 32 years (the 1985 drama A Woman of Substance pipped it to the post), and the second-biggest ever in Channel 4 history. It was still behind the Beeb's 2016 final, which drew in 14.8 million, but let's not split macarons here – after all, Prue Leith did give away the winner 12 hours before transmission…

Anyway, the anchor which enabled the new cast – judge Leith, and hosts Sandi Toksvig and Noel Fielding – to merge almost seamlessly into the old format was Paul Hollywood, the blue-eyed baking pro who's been with the show since series one. He's become notorious for his strict judging style as well as the occasional praise he doles out to those (very few) deserving bakers – the "Hollywood Handshake" has become serious currency in Bake Off circles.

The fact is, Hollywood knows his stuff. He began working at a bakery – his father's – as a teenager, and went on to work as head baker at a number of prestigious hotels and restaurants throughout the UK and in Cyprus. This was all before he found fame. During this time, he's learned a thing or two about baking.

In this new series, he prepares to impart some of that knowledge – as well as, giving this series a rather unique twist, integrating some previously unseen footage from the Bake Off tent and even the auditions phase. This means it's a must for any fans of the series, who are hungry for more helpings before the next series comes along.

Noel and Sandi crop up, too, offering their inimitable insights, while Prue is also on hand to keep Paul in line. Think of it as a reunion, then – especially when previous contestants Val and Selasi turn up to challenge Paul to bake a pistachio and rose petal roulade. Which he does, of course, with customary panache.

Other recipes – this is a baking show, after all – include Paul's favourite pizza recipe: a courgette, lemon and thyme-topped bake, an unusual combination for which he gives credit to Venice.

He also gets out and about, visiting the famous motor racing track Silverstone where he makes a childhood-favourite burger recipe for a barbecue held in the paddock, before heading back to the Bake Off tent with Prue, where he bakes a madeira celebration cake. He hands over the decoration of this particular confection to Noel and Sandi, who oblige with a "nude" meringue finish. Expect some risque puns about that, then.

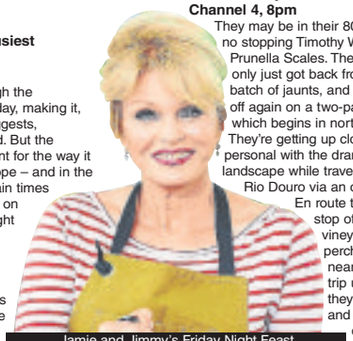
Paul Hollywood: A Baker's Life, Monday, Channel 4, 8pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Supershoppers
Channel 4, 8.30pm
New series. The consumer advice show returns with Anna Richardson joined by new co-presenter Sabrina Grant to provide the lowdown on favourite brands and retailers, as well as tips on how to get the best deals. In the first edition Anna and Sabrina look at supermarkets' own ranges and investigate whether cheaper value-range products might be identical to pricier standard own-label lines. Plus, they offer advice on how to buy cheaper car insurance, and there is a face-off between cheap and expensive beauty wipes.

TUESDAY
MOTD Live
BBC2, 6.55pm
Following their World Cup Qualifier against Bosnia on Friday, England Woman welcome Kazakhstan to Colchester United's Weston Homes Community Stadium. One player who can't wait for the Group One game is England's Essex-born defender Casey Stoney. 'I'm particularly looking forward to playing in Colchester,' the Liverpool star says. 'I come from Basildon so it's great to have a game in my home county.' This is the first time the two nations have met, and Mo Marley's Lionesses will be expected to put on a good showing tonight and secure a comfortable victory, similar to that of the 6-0 thrashing of Russia in September. Nikita Parris, Jodie Taylor, Jordan Nobbs, Lucy Bronze and Toni Duggan (two) were all on target that evening in Tranmere.

WEDNESDAY
The Channel: The World's Busiest Waterway
Channel 4, 9pm
More than 400 ships pass through the 21-mile-wide Dover Strait every day, making it, as the title of this new series suggests, the busiest waterway in the world. But the English Channel is also significant for the way it defines Britain's border with Europe – and in the wake of Brexit, these are uncertain times for the people who live and work on the waters. To offer a further insight into the life of the waterway, cameras go inside the Channel Tunnel, on board ferries and freighters and into the hidden nerve centres to see what it takes to keep the system moving. In the first episode, ferry captain Mark deals with high winds and drunk passengers, while swimmer Naomi attempts to navigate her way through some challenging conditions.


Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast, Friday, Channel 4, 8pm

THURSDAY
Great Canal Journeys
Channel 4, 8pm
They may be in their 80s, but there's no stopping Timothy West and Prunella Scales. They seem to have only just got back from their latest batch of jaunts, and here they are, off again on a two-part adventure which begins in north west Portugal. They're getting up close and personal with the dramatic local landscape while travelling down the Rio Douro via an old trade route. En route the couple will stop off at the local vineyards, often perched on the nearby hilltops. It's a trip unlike any they've taken before, and includes the deepest lock in Europe and various sites of ancient historical importance. But there's a little taste of home too in the form of a traditional English gentlemen's club in Porto before a chance to follow in the footsteps of a Yorkshire-born entrepreneur.

FRIDAY
Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast
Channel 4, 8pm
Hosts Jamie Oliver and Jimmy Doherty are joined by Joanna Lumley in their cafe at the end of Southend Pier, and this time the menu is exclusively vegetarian, as the Ab Fab actress cooks the King of Malaysia's favourite dish, bringing back to life the tastes and smells of her childhood. Jamie prepares a spectacular M'hanncha – a spiral of filo pastry stuffed with pearl barley and butternut squash and the boys take to the road to champion British fava beans – which could help both the nation's farmers and its diet.

Eight Days That Made Rome: The Downfall of Nero
Channel 5, 9pm
Bettany Hughes focuses on events leading up to and after 9th June 68AD, when Emperor Nero took his life, examining how it triggered the eventual decline of the Roman Empire.

Christmas Fair at Oakley Gardens
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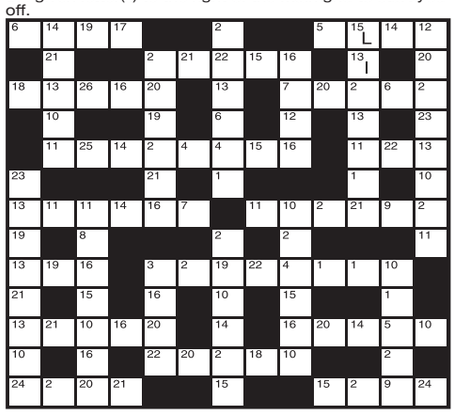
Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



1	14
2	15 L
3	16
4	17
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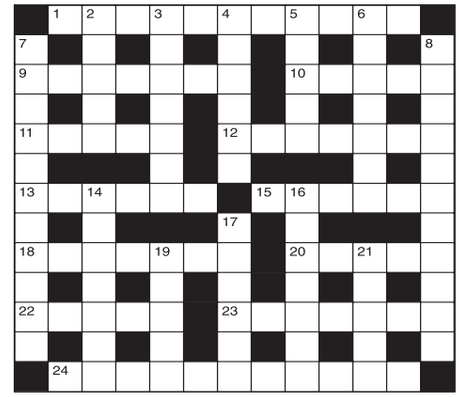
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13 I	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
E	H	S	O	D	I	Y	C	Z	F	P	T	B
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
A	R	J	K	M	G	U	W	X	Q	L	N	V

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. The old boy with the only perfume going out of date (11)
9. Put on one's own for not being punctual? (7)
10. Material from the French island (5)
11. A language of South India (5)
12. He has time to fill in his job (7)
13. Threaten to finish one politician (6)
15. Does he record runs in twenties? (6)
18. Wishing success before tomorrow? (4,3)
20. Song in really rich style (5)
22. Stale in the smallest degree (5)
23. Lie is wrong, certainly, but gives restful ease (7)
24. Zodiacal sign not revealed to office workers (11)

Down

2. Colour for brother to possess (5)
3. Enthusiastic applause for egg production? (7)
4. Corrects me on rising to conclusions (6)
5. Officer doesn't need the Spanish punctuation mark (5)
6. Retains more offensive order (7)
7. The bird presumably had something to sing about in the morning (11)
8. Insect on trial in international sport (4,7)
14. Irreligious, but in favour of temple (7)
16. He surfaces after work, of course (7)
17. Organ permitted to find loophole (6)
19. Put off animals from going inland eternally (5)
21. Stir or get up to exercise (5)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Besides (11)
9. Horseman's iron (7)
10. Granted (5)
11. Anoint (5)
12. Canadian province (7)
13. Flippancy (6)
15. Slumbering (6)
18. Excess (7)
20. Characteristic (5)
22. Decree (5)
23. Exhilaration (7)
24. Enterprise (11)

Down

2. Combine (5)
3. Flood (7)
4. Set at work (6)
5. Strength (5)
6. Daydream (7)
7. Permanent (11)
8. Very inefficient (11)
14. Rendering (7)
16. Relapse (3-4)
17. Acquiesce (6)
19. Supple (5)
21. Foreign (5)

Sudoku

	5		7	6	4		3	
		2				6		
	7	3			5		8	
7		5		8				2
			1		2		5	
3				4				6
	3				6		9	
		1				4		
	8		2	7	9		6	1

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

7	3	5	4	9	1	8	6	2
6	4	9	8	2	7	5	3	1
1	8	2	5	6	3	4	7	9
3	5	6	9	8	2	7	1	4
9	2	7	6	1	4	3	5	8
4	1	8	3	7	5	2	9	6
5	7	1	2	4	9	6	8	3
8	9	4	7	3	6	1	2	5
2	6	3	1	5	8	9	4	7

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Arranger; 5 Cool; 9 Purr; 10 Strident; 11 Right; 12 Replace; 13 Temperateness; 18 Apparent; 19 Goal; 20 Protege; 21 David; 22 Rake; 23 Standing.
Down: 2 Routine; 3 Airship; 4 Entertainment; 6 Operate; 7 Letters; 8 Simple; 13 Trapper; 14 Mapbook; 15 Earned; 16 Niggard; 17 Station.
QUICK - Across: 1 Sanctify; 5 Acid; 9 Byre; 10 Accident; 11 Smart; 12 Talents; 13 Play upon words; 18 Interest; 19 Thin; 20 Bondage; 21 Solid; 22 Elan; 23 Astonish.
Down: 2 Abysmal; 3 Clearly; 4 Facetiousness; 6 Cleaner; 7 Detests; 8 Pillow; 13 Pliable; 14 Antenna; 15 Uproar; 16 Outworn; 17 Deities.

Quiz

1. Which disorder is also called word blindness?
2. What is a dunlin?
3. In which children's TV series would you find Alderney and Tobermory?
4. Which singer was born Declan McManus?
5. Which US President was assassinated in Buffalo?
6. To which family does the lovebird belong?
7. Which Vicar of Dibley star posed nude for Esquire magazine?
8. Which art-form was regulated in the US by the Hays Office?
9. Of what is Ceres the largest known example?
10. According to Arthurian legend, who was Sir Galahad's father?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Benjamin Franklin; 2 Luxembourg; 3 J Edgar Hoover; 4 Polish; 5 Propaganda; 6 Aaron; 7 Muskrat; 8 One; 9 California; 10 George Eliot.

Niner: METAPHORS

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

34564 gives a French author,
14925 gives a French sculptor,
57899428 gives a French painter.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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Friends reunited for special birthday

WE have been friends since middle school, sharing the joys and tribulations of teenage years and later weddings and children.

And now we were all sharing a special birthday! For a few years now we had abandoned present buying for birthdays and Christmas and just arranged a meal or break away. And this weekend it was a special one.

We were staying at the five-star St David's Hotel and Spa which has a prominent position on Cardiff Bay's waterfront and it's a stone's throw from the city centre. The hotel is striking with its glass fronted structure on the edge of the bay.

Across the Severn Estuary we could see where we planned to spend our evening at Michelin-starred Restaurant James Sommerin in Penarth.

The restaurant is in a prime position on the seafront with contemporary and chic decor, including the use of Welsh slate, and crisp white table covers.

PRIVATE

There is also a private dining room and Chef's table. There is a huge window from the main restaurant to the kitchen, where you watch the chefs at work.

In a short amount of time James has amassed an array of accolades and just two days after our visit the restaurant won four Rosettes at The AA Hospitality Awards 2017.

Proud of his Welsh heritage James, who runs the restaurant with his wife Louise, uses the finest ingredients, locally sourced where possible. The food was exquisite.

We went for the six-course testing menu including matching wine. The options for the evening were the six courses, nine courses and also the Surprise Menu when you leave your dining experience in James' hands. It is then a bespoke menu.

Striking and imposing – Cardiff Bay's waterfront

Restaurant has panoramic views across the bay

Each course was expertly presented and a lovely touch was that the chefs including the man himself came to our table to run through the dishes.

The six courses started with beetroot, feta and pine-nut; followed by venison with carrot, tarragon and mushroom and then langoustine with samphire and spices; guinea fowl with sweetcorn, truffle and potato. For dessert there was pear with cinnamon, flap-jack and hazelnut and apple with puff pastry, caramel and vanilla.

After the meal, it was back to our hotel which is set on Cardiff Bay's waterfront.

Our rooms with balconies had views across the estuary and it was wonderful to watch the boats and yachts sailing by.

Relaxation was certainly the name of the weekend with Marina Spa being most inviting with relaxation pools, hydrotherapy multi jet marine pools, a sauna, gym, treatment rooms and a relaxation suite, whilst enjoying the beautiful views overlooking Cardiff Bay.

The hotel restaurant is beautiful and airy with lovely neutral and teal shades and floor-to-floor windows with panoramic views across the bay.

The Admiral St David draws inspiration from the eclectic food culture and bold flavours of Australasia and Asia-Pacific, while looking closer to home for the best of seasonal Welsh produce.

After breakfast at the Admiral we wandered around Cardiff Bay which used to be known as Tiger Bay. It has been transformed with the Giant Wheel, restaurants and bars and the Senedd – home to the Welsh Government. Next door is the Wales Millenium Centre. There is also the Norwegian Church which Roald Dahl had attended as a child and is now Cafe Norsk. LISA BAILEY

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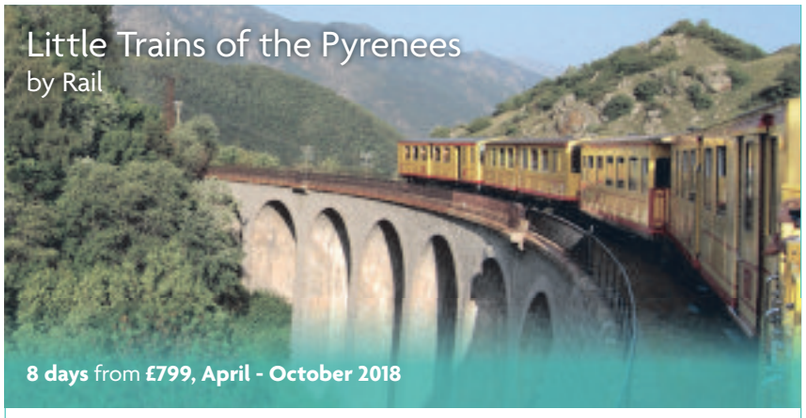

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This luxury apartment has a first-floor bedroom. The room is of double bed size with surrounding space for desks and wardrobes.

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A spokesman for the selling agents, loveyourpostcode.com, said: "Further benefits of this apartment are the location links and amenities. Within the hotspot of Birmingham City Centre, popular attractions such as the Mailbox and Bullring shopping centres are within walking distance.

"Furthermore, New Street train station is also close by providing travel links from Birmingham and beyond."

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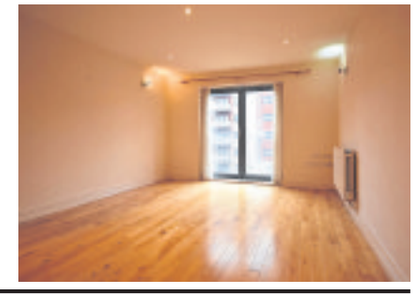
Open plan layout
Juliette balcony



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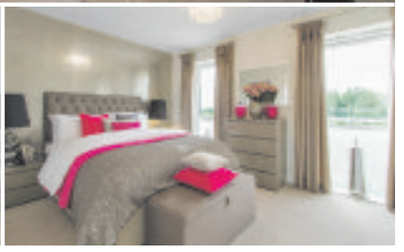

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7 Jobs
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9 Local Information

Public Notices

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(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Kelvin Way, West Bromwich) (Temporary No Waiting At Any Time) Order 2017 has made an Order to temporarily prohibit waiting at any time at the following locations in Kelvin Way, West Bromwich: Kelvin Way – south side – from a point 70 metres from the extended eastern kerbline of Dawes Avenue for a distance of 45 metres in an easterly direction. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work necessitating a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order is expected to be completed by 26/11/18, effective from 27/11/17. Purpose – to assist access and egress for vehicles entering BMV's site compound throughout the period of the Oldbury Viaduct works on M5 by BMV.

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Hobicus Lane (former) and potential historic footpath off Mill Lane, Langley) (Temporary Road and Footpath Closure) Order 2017, has made an Order to temporarily prohibit any vehicles from proceeding along the road formally known as Hobicus Lane, Langley and pedestrians from passing via the potential historic footpath off Mill Lane, Iangley. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 26/05/19 effective from 27/11/17. No diversion routes will be signed. Purpose – to facilitate the proposed extinguishment of public highway by Lioncourt Homes.

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Taylors Lane, West Bromwich) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2017, has made an Order to temporarily prohibit any vehicles from proceeding along Taylors Lane, West Bromwich. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 22/12/17 effective from 04/12/17. A diversion route for traffic will be signed via Stoney Lane, St Clement's Lane and vice-versa. Purpose – to facilitate works to a gas main by Balfour Beatty for Cadent Gas Ltd.

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
Regeneration and Planning
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

I hereby give notice that Sandwell Council has received the following applications under the planning acts which it is required to give public notice for the reason given at the beginning of each group of applications.

This is a major application.

DC/17/61207	Mr Shipley Mirage Property Services Ltd	Unit 4, The Farley Centre, High Street, West Bromwich B70 7QU	Proposed change of use to bingo club (Use Class D2).

Members of the public may inspect copies of these applications at Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE (between 8.45a.m. and 5.30p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Wednesday and 8.45a.m. to 5p.m. Friday) or via the Council's Public Access website (www.sandwell.gov.uk).

Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications can do so via the website, or should write to the Council at the above address within 21 days (and 21 days for Listed Building or Conservation Area consent) of the date of this advertisement quoting the application reference number.

MR JAN BRITTON, Chief Executive

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Lambert End, West Bromwich) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2017, intends to temporarily prohibit any vehicles from proceeding along Lambert End, West Bromwich. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 12/12/17, effective from 08/12/17. Traffic will be diverted via Wood Lane, Wheatley Street, Harwood Street and vice-versa. Purpose – sewer inspection by Enviromotel Ltd for Severn Trent Water.

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Mornington Road, Smethwick) (Prohibition of Turning) Order 2017, intends to temporarily prohibit any vehicles from turning right out of Mornington Road into Downing Street. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 19/12/17, effective from 04/12/17. Traffic will be diverted via Cornwall Road, Rabone Lane and Bridge Street North. Purpose – gas main improvement works by Balfour Beatty for Cadent Gas Ltd.

GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE

Hill Top Transport Ltd of 56/58 Hill Top, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B70 0PU is applying to change an existing licence as follows: To keep an extra THREE goods vehicles and NIL trailers at the operating centre at 56/58 Hill Top, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B70 0PU.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds LS9 6NF stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.

Dated: November 23, 2017

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Personal

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Kia's updated flagship premium Sorento SUV

There's a more European set-up in terms of suspension, steering and handling

By Carmel Stewart

Driving a Kia in Korea is a sure-fire way to fit in with the thousands of drivers rushing in and out of Seoul every day, as the vast majority show great brand loyalty by driving home-grown vehicles.

Many commuters favour the Kia Ray – a boxy little commuter special made solely for the Korean market. At the other end of the spectrum is the flagship Sorento SUV which puts Kia into the premium sector alongside the likes of the Audi Q5 and the Volvo XC60.

First introduced here in 2002, it does not have a huge road presence in the UK but is, nevertheless, always on the verge of breaking into the big time. A quality seven-seater, all-wheel-drive with a 2,500kg towing capacity, it is well able to hold its own among the Volvos and Land Rovers on the school run and rural rough stuff.

It has gone through a few incarnations over the years with the third-generation model being added in 2014. Each time sales have far exceeded expectations .

The new Sorento is what is called a 'product enhancement model'. It is based on the 2014 version but with a host of changes.

As with all Kias, its production has been overseen by two key players. Designer and president, Peter Schreyer, joined Kia in 2006 from Audi where he was responsible for the sleek and instantly recognisable

The Sorento is a quality seven-seater

Audi TT, among other vehicles. His designs have established a Kia family look and a more European appeal. Engineering expert, Albert Biermann, who joined the company from BMW in 2015, has added a more European set-up in terms of suspension, steering, and handling.

The net result is a well put together, good looking, stylish SUV with new grille, bumpers, lighting clusters and alloys, a spacious, comfortable interior, uncluttered dash and flexible seating which offers plenty of space for seven average sized occupants. Six-footers may struggle to get comfortable in the rearmost seats which pull out from the floor.

The excellent sat nav displayed on an eight-inch screen has clear maps and all the information required. It will only confound if set to Korean as this includes a warning baby squeak should you attempt to sneak over the designation speed limit. Given that UK vehicles will all give directions in English, the way forward should be clear and squeak free.

In keeping with other premium brands, Kia has incorporated hi-tech connectivity into the system so that full smartphone integration is achieved via Apple CarPlay and Android Auto with a wireless smartphone charger for charging while on the move.

Engine and transmission options are very straightforward – a 2.2litre diesel engine, married to either a six-speed manual transmission or an ultra-smooth eight-speed automatic which offers a choice of driving modes – Eco, Comfort, Sport and Smart – which drivers can select to suit their driving style and the conditions. Sorting out which is best for you is a matter of trial and error as changes to the steering response and power input are very subtle.

The real changes come with the new technologies which Kia has bunched together under its Drive Wise driver assistance package and include driver attention warning, which alerts the driver when he or she shows signs of drowsiness, plus lane keep assist and full LED headlamps with dynamic bending lights.

The 2018 Sorento, Mark 3:1 will be offered with trims KX 1, 2, plus the sporty GT Line and GT Line S replacing 3 and 4. The GT versions will inevitably up the ante both in price and aesthetics, adding LED fog lights, red brake callipers, a more prominent sill step and dual chrome exhaust. Inside, classy leather quilted seat and embroidered GT Line emblems together with satin chrome highlights add to the premium feel.

The new Sorento is due in the UK towards the end of this year. Pricing is expected to be in the £30,000 to £40,000 bracket if previous levels are anything to go by.

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SEAT's new Arona in showrooms now

By James Parker

The Arona joins the growing compact crossover market, next to the likes of the new Volkswagen T-Roc and Kia Stonic.

The five-seater baby SUV is based on the same MQB A0 platform as the latest Ibiza supermini, and shares much of its styling with the larger Ateca SUV. Prices start at £16,555.

Customers have a choice of six trim levels – SE, SE Technology, FR, FR Sport, Xcellence and Xcellence Lux – as well as two limited-run specifications from launch. These are SE Technology First Edition and Xcellence First Edition.

Much of its styling is shared with the larger Ateca SUC

The five-seater is based on the MQB AO platform

There are six trims – SE, SE Technology, FR, FR Sport, Xcellence and Xcellence Lux – and two limited-run specifications

Technology

The Arona SE is the entry-level model, and comes with standard equipment such as 17-inch alloys, a bi-colour roof, LED daytime running lights and a DAB radio to name but a few features.

SE Technology builds on this by adding Seat's Connectivity Pack Plus, which includes an eight-inch touchscreen with satellite navigation, Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. Prices start at £17,330.

The FR and FR Sport models lend the Arona a more performance-orientated appearance. FR cars gain a different style of 17-inch alloy, twin tailpipes, full LED headlights and sports front seats among other features.

The Arona FR Sport benefits from 18-inch alloys, dynamic chassis control and black Alcantara upholstery.

The FR and FR Sport cost from £19,680 and £20,450 respectively.

Xcellence and Xcellence Lux trim levels focus more on convenience and sophistication than their sporty FR counterparts.

Xcellence models gain keyless entry and start, blind spot detection and rear cross traffic alert.

Aronas in Xcellence Lux specification add 18-inch alloys, Alcantara upholstery, front parking sensors, a rear parking camera and park assist.

Prices for the Xcellence and Xcellence Lux models start at £20,825 and £21,880 respectively.

Limited-run SE Technology First Edition and Xcellence First Edition models are also available at launch. The former costs from £18,730, and includes features such as heated front seats, dual-zone climate control and adaptive cruise control.

Xcellence First Edition cars cost from £22,020 and add a Beats sound system, rear parking camera and heated seats among other features.

The Arona is priced competitively against the likes of the Volkswagen T-Roc, which starts at £20,425, while Kia's new Stonic only just undercuts it at £16,295.

The compact crossover is available with a selection of petrol and diesel engines, with power ranging from 94bhp to 148bhp.

Order books for the new Seat Arona are now open.

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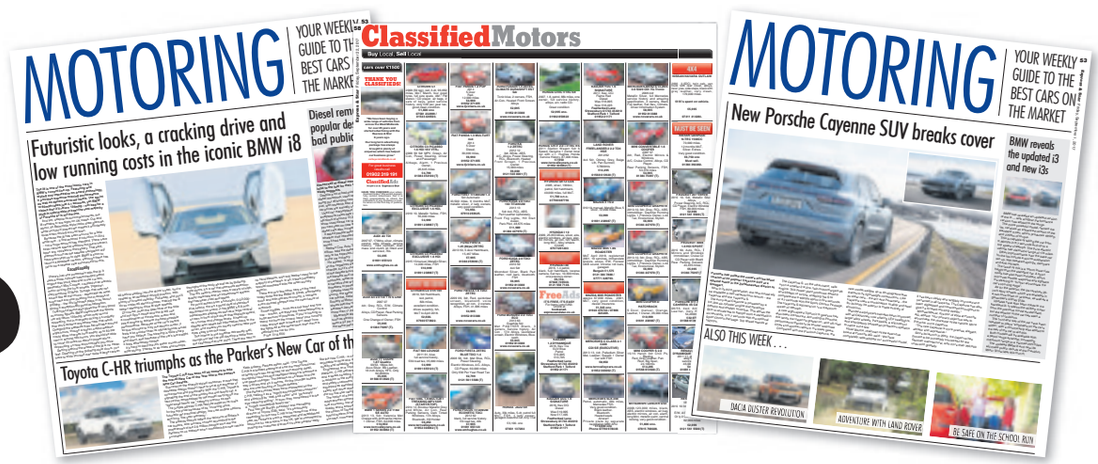

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Chris as Walsall manager in 1995, after the signing of Derek Mountfield

Nicholl heads the ball towards goal during one of his 210 appearances for Aston Villa

A picture captures the impact as Jeff Astle heads the ball

Playing for Villa in the 1970s seen with the League Cup trophy

Chris in his later years, still a favourite with the crowds at the Saddlers

Ex-Walsall boss Chris tells of memory fears

FORMER Walsall manager and Villa captain Chris Nicholl has said he no longer remembers where he lives – due to brain damage caused by years of heading footballs.

The 71-year-old, who still lives in the West Midlands, has said his condition is continuing to get worse. The Northern Ireland international won two League Cups with Villa in the 1970s, famously netting a long-range stunner in the 1977 final against Everton.

After he retired from playing, Nicholl led Walsall to promotion from Division Three in 1995 during a three-year stint as manager.

He spoke to former England striker Alan Shearer as part of a BBC documentary investigating links between dementia and heading footballs.

Nicholl said: "I am brain-damaged from heading footballs.

"My memory is in trouble. Everyone forgets regular things, where your keys are.

"But when you forget where you live, that's different.

"I've had that for the last four or five years, it is definitely getting worse. It bothers me."

Degenerative

Nicholl is among a string of former pros – including Albion legend Jeff Astle – to have been struck down after their playing days have ended.

Astle died in 2002 aged just 59 from chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a degenerative brain disease caused by heading footballs.

His family have been campaigning for years to get the Football Association and FIFA to conduct research into heading.

Shearer, who made his top-flight debut as a teenager under Nicholl at Southampton, said: "It was tough to see the way Chris is now, because he gave me my debut.

"He had me heading 100 or 150 balls a day to improve, but he did it for the right reasons."

The BBC documentary shows current Aston Villa captain John Terry admitting he encourages his 11-year-old daughter Summer Rose to head the ball, even though experts fear girls are at the greatest risk of concussion.

Shearer, 47, had scans and tests to examine how heading the ball affected him, amid fears he has sustained long-term damage.

The results were revealed on the show, Alan Shearer, Dementia, Football and Me, which was first shown on BBC1 on Sunday, November 12 at 10.30pm and is available on the BBC iplayer.

Alan Shearer, who fears he may be susceptible to dementia after heading the ball throughout his footballing career

SPORTING FEATURE

By David Cosgrove

The Match of the Day pundit said: "Nowhere near enough research has been done. The authorities have been very reluctant to find out any answers.

"They have swept it under the carpet, which is not good enough.

"Football must look after old players with dementia and put an end to this sense that, once you are done playing, you can be put on the scrapheap.

"It's a tough game, it's a brilliant game, but we have to make sure it's not a killer game."

Experts suspected heading footballs may cause brain damage and dementia for decades but a firm link was not made until the inquest into Astle's death.

A coroner found he died from a form of dementia called CTE, known as boxer's brain, caused by heading footballs.

In the 15 years since, neither the Football Association nor international body FIFA have funded any meaningful research into the dangers of heading footballs.

FA medical director Charlotte Cowie accepted it had avoided the issue in the past but said: "I feel we like are running towards this problem at the moment."

She said the FA were looking to study former professional footballers to get results as quickly as possible, and it could ban children from heading the ball if early evidence showed it damaged the brain.

Knockout night with boxing champ Fury

BOXING fans can enjoy a knockout night as Tyson Fury makes his debut appearance in Wolverhampton for an audience with fans.

The 'Turkey & Tinsel with Tyson' takes place on December 13 at the Ramada Park Hall Hotel.The former unified heavyweight champion of the world will share his personal story – live and unscripted on stage, interviewed by Gareth A Davis.

He will answer questions from the audience, with the festive evening also featuring a mix of top entertainment, red carpet drinks reception, memorabilia auction and Christmas meal.

Tickets start at £55, rising to £85 for a silver package and £150 for gold, which includes a picture with Fury. For the full VIP experience at £200 guests can also enjoy a VIP meet and greet, a prime table location and a signed glove.

Fundraising will be in aid of Foundation DB set up by Wolves captain Danny Batth. Tickets are being sold at www.tysonfury.eventbrite.co.uk

Pitching in for work on new 3G surface

A NEW 3G pitch is to be launched at Dudley's Dell Stadium. The modern playing surface will replace the existing 18-year-old artificial grass pitch.

The work, part of Dudley council's playing pitch strategy, began on Monday and should take around 12 weeks to complete. The project was developed in partnership with Sport England and the Football Association.

The £660,000 cost will be made up of £550,000 funding through The FA, The Football Foundation and £110,000 from Dudley Council.

Existing users of the facility have been temporarily relocated to other sites in the borough and the Saturday morning ParkRun has been suspended for the duration of the works.

This investment is in addition to the council's commitment to invest £22m in the wider leisure service which includes plans for a new leisure centre in Dudley, as well as refurbishing and modernising the existing leisure centres in Halesowen and Stourbridge. Booking enquires should be made to Steve Gay, area manager, at steve.gay@dudley.gov.uk

Greats turn out for former team-mate

MIDLAND footballing greats came together to help raise funds for former Albion and Villa goalkeeper Derek Dudley, who is suffering from a terminal illness. The 47-year-old contracted a serious liver condition and it was his final wish to bring former friends from the footballing world together for a final game. It was staged on Sunday at Sutton Coldfield Town FC's home ground where a number of former players were watched by a large crowd.

Dudley, who spent four years at Villa, lives in Rugeley with his wife Helen and children Daniel, 13, and Elizabeth, 11.

His bucket list includes having a nice meal with his children and getting the 'lads' together for one last game.

He was joined by members of Villa's 1982 European Cup winning side including Peter Withe, Tony Morley and Gordon Cowans as well former Baggies team-mates including Daryl Burgess and Darren Bradley

When his football career ended, Derek became a teacher, including a spell at The Brades Lodge school in Tividale.

Sport

Former Saddlers boss in memory loss fears

Page 39

Chelsea the final dagger for manager

Albion 0 Chelsea 4

AS this turned out, Saturday's 4-0 rout turned out to be the last act of Tony Pulis's Albion adventure.

He came out swinging in his programme notes with a staunch defence of his time at the club in an effort to 'remind' fans what he had done for them, *writes Matt Wilson*.

But all that fight had drizzled out of him by full-time – and two days later the Welshman was gone.

Swathes of empty seats at kick-off were a reminder of how much interest has waned, and even more streamed out of the gates when Eden Hazard scored Chelsea's fourth on the hour mark.

Following a run of two wins in 21 league games those who stayed behind made their feelings heard, deeming it necessary with owner Guochuan Lai in attendance. However, it was not the toxic cauldron of hate some were predicting, because, as it later proved, everyone seemed to know that time was up.

Pulis refused to criticise his team and they did start brightly, before fading once the third goal went in, Marcos Alonso adding to Alvaro Morata's opener and a first from Hazard.

But apart from a determined few, and in particular Claudio Yacob, in the second half most of the team were simply going through the motions.

It was telling that Albion's most threatening forward player was Matt Phillips and their most influential defensive wall was Yacob – two players Pulis coach has ignored too much recently.

Feelgood factor is back as Tivi head in right direction

BOSS Dave King believes the feelgood factor has returned to Tividale as they continue to ride high in the West Midlands Premier Division.

Saturday's resounding 6-1 win at home to Shifnal Town ensured Tivi remain second in the table, four points behind Wolverhampton Sporting Community.

After relegations which saw them plummet from the Southern League, Tivi are now heading in the right direction. And King admitted: "We thought we might be in for a dogfight. But with most of the lads from last season staying on I always felt we had a chance.

"There is a great vibe around the place at the moment," said King, who was appointed in the summer of 2016 and forced to build a squad from scratch.

Black Country Rangers, remain fourth after a 3-1 win over AFC Bridgnorth.

Cradley Town are still firmly in touch with the pacesetters after winning 3-1 at home to Dudley Sports, their third victory on the spin. In Division One, Tipton Town were edged out 3-2 by Team Dudley.

Ace McAuley drops in on festival

McAuley, Price and Smith with youngsters

ASPIRING Albion female footballers were boosted by the visit of Gareth McAuley and two of Albion Women's shining lights.

Hannah Price and Antonia Smith joined Baggies first-team defender McAuley as they checked in at The Albion Foundation's Player Development Centre Football Festival.

The festival was designed to inspire the next generation of female players. Northern Ireland ace McAuley explained how important the opportunity was for young girls and how far the female game has developed.

"I started out playing football at school and they had no girls there," said McAuley.

"It's probably not that they were not interested in football, but they were not given the opportunity or the chance, but now it is such a big thing."

He added: "It's been interesting seeing the girls play, they are very technical in what they are doing. I was really impressed."

Price and Smith remarked at the impressive level of opportunity for young girls to get into the game.

To get involved with The Albion Foundation's Girls' Player Development Centre, email lauren.affron@albionfoundation.co.uk

BAGGIES WIELD AXE ON PULIS

ALBION are targeting a head coach with Premier League experience after sacking Tony Pulis – but it's believed former skipper Derek McInnes would be open to an approach.

Chairman John Williams has begun the search for a new boss after wielding the axe on Pulis following a run of two wins in 21 games.

Ideally he would like to employ a manager with experience of coaching in the Premier League, which would appear to exclude current Aberdeen boss McInnes.

Derek McInnes

Sources in Scotland suggest the former captain would listen to offers from the club he spent three years at as a player.

The ambitious 46-year-old is keen for a crack at the Premier Leaguethree successive second-placed finishes behind Celtic in the Scottish Premiership.

However, while not totally ruling out McInnes, Albion's top brass are keen for their new man to have top-flight experience.

Williams said: "These decisions are never taken lightly but always in the interests of the club.

"We are in a results business and over the back end of last season and this season to date, ours have been very disappointing.

"We would like to place on record our appreciation of Tony's contribution and hard work during a period of transition for the club which included a change of ownership."

Assistant head coach and former manager Gary Megson has been put in charge of first-team affairs until further notice. The rest of the coaching staff also remain in situ for the time being. Williams is now actively searching for a new head coach and has a prior working relationship with Sam Allardyce, one of the early favourites for the role. He employed Allardyce at Blackburn Rovers and stepped down as executive chairman in 2011 two months after being forced to fire him by Venky's – who owned the club.

Northern Ireland boss Michael O'Neill is reportedly keen, but the Baggies board are not convinced and are looking elsewhere for now. Pulis said he was proud to have managed the Baggies.

In a statement made via the League Managers' Association, Pulis said: "Over the last three years we have achieved a great deal. I strongly believe this group of players can finish in the upper reaches of the Premier League."

He now heads the market at 4/7 to take over from Chris Coleman as Wales boss.

Head coach Tony Pulis was fired after a near three-year reign at The Hawthorns

Spaniard in the works for title bout

RICKY Summers has vowed to take out his frustration on new opponent Romero Gonzalo this weekend.

The Tipton light heavyweight was set to face Coventry's Joe Sherriff for the vacant Midlands Area Light Heavyweight Title on Saturday but illness has forced his opponent out and Summers will now face Spanish opposition at the top of BCB Promotions' show at the Imperial Banqueting Suite, Bilston.

The 30 year-old knows patience is a virtue after waiting for his chance to battle Frank Buglioni for the British Title last time out.

That fight was postponed for a number of months after Buglioni, who went on to claim a points victory, suffered a cut in sparring.

Summers though, frustrated by Sherriff's late pull out, is ready to put in a career-best performance against Gonzalo next weekend.

"The only word to sum it up is frustration," he explained. "I'm ready to take my frustrations out on him and blow him out the water."

Meanwhile Rowley Regis' Jason Welborn lines up for his 28th bout having seen his year stalled since a one-sided points victory over the unbeaten Marcus Morrison live on Sky in March.

Black Country boys James Beech Jr and debutant Antony Woolery also feature.

Tickets are £35, or £40 on the night, via the boxers on Facebook or at iboxingtickets.com

Tests completed in Dalian death probe

AN investigation into the death of former Aston Villa player Dalian Atkinson is nearing completion. Fresh tests of forensic evidence were required over fears toxiciology results had been "compromised".

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), which is carrying out the investigation, has confirmed that tests have now been completed.

Mr Atkinson, 48, died after being shot with a police taser outside his father's house in Trench on August 15 last year.

An inquest heard earlier this year that the investigation into his death had to be delayed.

★★★

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